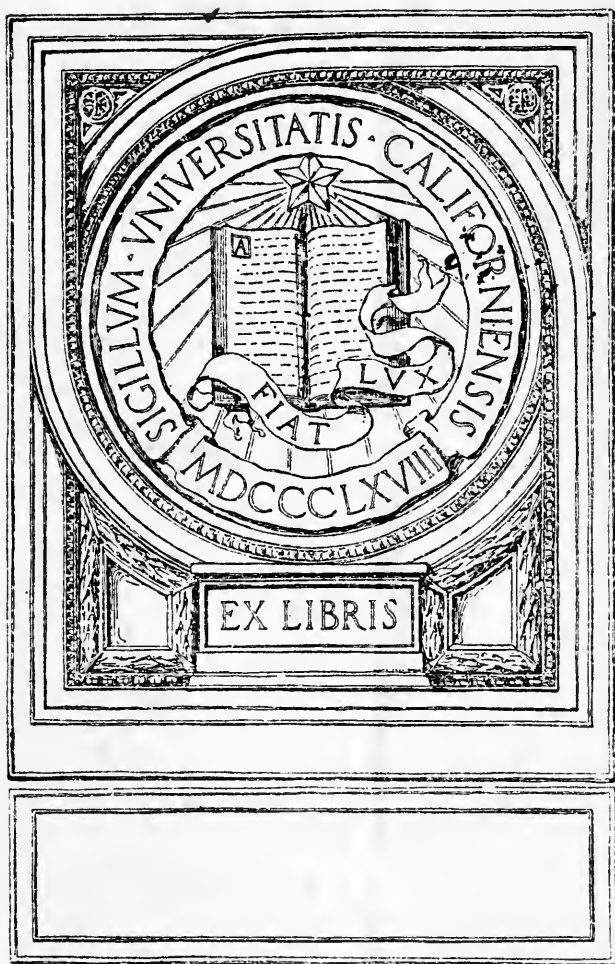


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# THE LITTLE DAUPHIN







THE DAUPHIN (LOUIS XVII)

*From a painting by Kocharski at Versailles*

# THE LITTLE DAUPHIN

BY

CATHARINE WELCH

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

METHUEN & CO.  
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LONDON

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TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THE  
ASSOCIATION

## PREFACE

IN writing this book I have received help and advice from several persons. I wish particularly to express my indebtedness to Mr. Richard Whiteing, to M. Parizet, and to M. and Madame Dispan, to Mr. W. Shaw Sparrow, to Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, to M. Foulon de Vaulx, who has permitted me to reproduce a portrait in his possession, to Lady Ritchie, who has permitted me to reproduce a picture formerly owned by W. M. Thackeray, and to my father, who has helped me in many ways.





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California



MARIE ANTOINETTE  
*From a painting by Callet*



# THE LITTLE DAUPHIN

## CHAPTER I

A PRINCE IS BORN—A REVOLUTION BEGINS

AT Versailles there was born in 1785 a prince, third child of Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI., King of France and Navarre. Nothing in the circumstance of his birth indicated how strange a career awaited him, nor suggested that in this little boy had been put into the world what was destined to become the most romantic personage of the Bourbon dynasty, and the saddest figure in all the history of France.

He was a second son, and to all appearance his foreordained place in life was to be in youth an unimportant younger prince, and to change, on the accession of his elder brother, to an equally obscure Monsieur. But four years later death altered all that, and made of this boy the heir of France and all her miseries.

Just such a lot had been his father's, who,

born a younger son, came unexpectedly, thanks to the death of his elder brothers, into the ill-starred kingdom of Louis XV. This unforeseen inheritance was of a piece with the ill-luck that was throughout his life the daily fate of this blameless and stupid man, whom Nature intended for an industrious *bourgeois*, and whom an absent-minded Providence set down instead on the throne of France—the worst example in history of a square peg in a round hole.

Poor Louis could do nothing right. He could not manage his kingdom, nor love his wife, nor even dance a minuet. Shy, awkward, incompetent, he could only love his people, as none of his house had ever loved them before, while always doing what was worst for them and for himself. Perhaps, as he jolted over the cobbles of Paris a few years later, this unhappy King, who meant so well, and did so ill, may have considered that the road to his scaffold was paved indeed with his good intentions. Had Louis but only meant ill by his country, he might have mastered it, and lived to a right Bourbon old age, to die in comfort in his royal bed, leaving behind him to his heir the same fine kingdom he had himself inherited. But Louis, alas, always meant well.

At fifteen, a fat, silent boy, he married the

Austrian Archduchess, Marie-Antoinette, herself a child, but already full of that charm which was always peculiarly her own.

Scarcely had she reached Paris when one of the court, pointing to the people who cheered the young Dauphine, said to the bride, "Madame, you have there before your eyes not one, but two hundred thousand lovers."

A fortnight after her marriage, while the festivities were still in progress, there occurred a panic amongst the crowd gathered to see the fireworks. More than a thousand people were killed. The catastrophe was an omen, perhaps, of the tragic fate that awaited Marie-Antoinette in her new country, where her two hundred thousand humble lovers were destined so soon to grow cold and her husband was destined for so long to prove indifferent.

The beauty of this pretty child was as undeniable as was her indiscretion. The famous description which Madame Le Brun has written gives an excellent idea of her charm.

"Marie-Antoinette was tall," says the royal portrait painter, "and admirably proportioned; plump, without being too much so. Her arms were lovely. She had small and perfectly-shaped hands, and charming little feet." (Her foot and leg were worthy of the Venus de Medici, according to her dressmaker.)

"She walked better than any woman in France, holding her head very upright with a majesty that denoted the Sovereign in the midst of her court, but without permitting this majestic bearing to detract in the least from the sweetness and grace of her whole aspect."

Meeting her when Queen at Fontainebleau, the painter ventured to compliment Marie-Antoinette on her beautiful carriage.

Marie-Antoinette laughed. "Isn't it true," she asked, "that if I were not Queen, people would say I looked insolent?"

In face, her beauty was of an irregular sort, her lips over full, perhaps, her chin dented, her eyes not large and almost blue, and her nose thin and well modelled. Her expression was gentle and appealing, for Marie-Antoinette had a pitiful instinctive wish to please all whom she met. Her chief beauty, however, was her magnificent complexion. "I could never in painting her obtain the effect I wished," says Madame Le Brun. "Paints could not depict the freshness and delicate tints of her skin, the like of which I have never seen in any other woman."

It is no wonder that this charming girl fascinated all France, touched the heart—so it is said—of old Louis XV., her grandfather-in-law, and aroused the jealousy of the royal favourite,

Madame du Barry. The wonder is only that her husband, dull though he was, did not, from the first, feel her attraction. Perhaps she bewildered him, this beautiful young creature who had been flung into his humdrum life; perhaps he was afraid of her. At any rate, the young Prince appeared indifferent to her, while Marie-Antoinette, grieved and resentful, was forced to seek how best she might avenge herself for his slight and find distraction against his apathy. Naturally capricious and light-headed, the girl threw herself into more than natural extravagances and indiscretions. She was sowing, poor Princess, the seeds of that unpopularity which was destined, years after, to destroy her.

Neither she nor her husband had reached their twentieth birthdays when Louis XV. died, bequeathing to his grandson the revolution which the old King's life of long-drawn infamy had made nearly inevitable.

"Oh, God!" cried the boy and girl, kneeling side by side to hear the news of his death, "we are too young to reign. Guard us and protect us!" But their prayer was unheard, and the oppressed nation showed itself but too ready to visit on these two children the sins of their grandfather.

Louis had no idea how to reign. "He might have made the best workman in France,"

but he was a very poor king. Marie-Antoinette, even had she been in sympathy with him, could not have helped him greatly. He was, despite his incompetence—perhaps because of it—a man of mulish obstinacy. The Queen therefore, even if she had wished, could not have influenced him much in public affairs. It does not seem, however, that she often wished to do so. She was essentially a woman rejoicing in social matters, neither caring for serious things nor able to understand them. She left Louis free to accomplish his own destruction in his own way. Poor, stupid, good Louis took advantage of his opportunity. France was in that condition when, to be saved from disaster, it needed a king who was a genius; instead, there was set on the throne a man who was in many ways next to a fool. The consequences were tragic and inevitable.

Marie-Antoinette, meantime, was struggling against a mass of cruel intrigues. From her husband's family she had met, from the moment of her marriage, with dislike and disloyalty. The King's aunts opposed her jealously, his brothers worked against her, one by attempting to make illicit love to her, the other by plotting against her and spreading false rumours about her. We can only wonder that, in the midst of so little sympathy and so much distrust, this

frivolous and much-tempted young Queen, long unloved by her husband and disappointed of much-desired children, still kept herself guiltless of any faults except a compromising but quite innocent giddiness.

The royal couple was eight years childless, and during this time the Comte de Provence and the Comte d'Artois, Louis's younger brothers, grew to hope that the throne might, in default of direct heir, pass to them. Provence, the elder, was naturally the more ambitious. He hated Marie-Antoinette, and was incurably jealous of the brother but for whom he would have reigned. He was—of this the actions of his whole life leave no possibility of doubt—a thoroughly unscrupulous man.

He incited the handsome Comte d'Artois, it is said, to his dishonourable and unsuccessful attempts to gain his Queen's love. On the birth of a son to the Comte and Comtesse d'Artois, Monsieur warned the father with a vile cynicism to "take care lest in pursuing his own love-affairs he do an injury to his own heir."

At last, in 1778, Marie-Antoinette's first child was born—alas! a girl—for France was impatient for a Dauphin, and the disappointment did not increase the Queen's swift-diminishing popularity. To Louis, however, any child of Marie-Antoinette's was welcome, for his feelings

towards his Queen had by this time changed completely, and he now loved her with an adoration which the rakish Bourbons had not till then been wont to give to their legitimate consorts.

The Comte de Provence was delighted at the Queen's disappointment, which left him still heir-presumptive. None the less, with an astonishing boldness, he dared to pretend that the child was illegitimate.

It was at the little Princess's christening that he made publicly this scandalous insinuation.

The ceremony had begun, and the Comte de Provence, as godfather, was holding his baby niece in his arms.

"What name shall be given to this child?" asked the priest.

"Monsieur," replied the Prince maliciously, "that is not the first question you have to ask. You should first inquire who are its father and mother."

The priest blushed, the crowd tittered, and the Comte de Provence, delighted with the scandal he had caused, smiled sardonically, holding carefully in his arms the while the baby whose dishonour he was trying to accomplish. The incident was typical of this man, whose manners were perfect, but whose heart was full of intrigue.



Three years later, the son that France desired and the Comte de Provence dreaded was born. This child, destined to a short life, seemed none the less to put an end to Monsieur's ambition, and to that of his younger brother, the Comte d'Artois.

"Oh, papa! how little my cousin is!" cried the young son of this latter, when for the first time he had looked upon the baby Dauphin.

"The day will come when you will think him great enough, my dear," answered the disappointed Comte d'Artois bitterly.

Versailles was full of intrigues and quarrels and magnificent extravagance. Starving France, meantime, was inundated with libellous pamphlets about Marie-Antoinette, whom the people had been led to think was beggaring them. It seems unbelievable that such scandalous matter should have been printed and circulated about the woman whose seat on the French throne was at that time still firm enough.

In one pamphlet we find Marie-Antoinette described as "a bad daughter, a bad wife, a bad mother, and a bad Queen," and to this is appended "a list of the persons with whom she has had dishonourable relations." In another pamphlet, entitled "The Iscariot of France," she is compared to Judas; the resemblance, in the eyes of those who hated her, being

thrown down upon her. It was impossible to move about the chamber, which was filled with so motley a crowd, one might have fancied oneself at some place of popular amusement. Finally, the servants dragged out by the collar such inconsiderate persons as would not leave the room voluntarily."

This incredibly barbarous custom was thereafter abandoned, and, in consequence, only the members of the royal family and a few others bore witness to the birth of Prince Louis-Charles, between six and seven o'clock in the evening of Easter Sunday, March 27, 1785.

Contrary to the ancient custom which postponed the baptism of royal children for some years, the baby Prince was christened immediately, and was given the title of Duc de Normandie—one not used since the times of Charles VII.—within two hours of his birth. The ceremony took place in the chapel of Versailles, and was conducted, curiously enough, by Cardinal de Rohan, who was then in the midst of the famous diamond necklace intrigue, which so greatly and so unfairly damaged the reputation of Marie-Antoinette. The godfather was the child's uncle, the Comte de Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII., and the godmother Marie-Antoinette's sister, the Queen of Naples, who was in her absence represented by another

of the baby's aunts, Madame Elisabeth, that gentle sister of the King who "possessed the charm of a pretty milkmaid and was an angel of goodness."

The King and all the court were present, and afterwards there was a great celebration, with fireworks, for the people. Next night there was lighted on the Place de Grève, according to the usual custom, a great bonfire of five hundred faggots crowned with a green tree.

We hear nothing, however, of any such demonstration as took place at the birth of the first Dauphin, Louis-Charles's elder brother by four years. On this former occasion, the populace, delighted at the arrival of a long-awaited heir, sent deputations of all the trades from Paris to Versailles to pay their respects to the royal baby. There came chimney-sweeps and locksmiths, and butchers and representatives of all the other trades of the period, each bearing appropriate emblems, and finally—with a tactlessness that was at once gruesome and comic—a body of grave-diggers with their tools.

"The child is doomed!" cried the courtiers; and in this case the superstitious triumphed, for eight years later the grave-diggers did their work for this boy whose birth had been greeted so gloomily.

the Empress Maria-Theresa, who taught the little Archduchess as a child rather to fear and respect than to love her. Marie-Antoinette, in turn, forming the plan of education for her own offspring, as is so often the case with parents, on what she deemed to have been the errors in her own, determined that her children should never feel anything but unconstrained and at home with their mother.

The family on which she made this amiable experiment was not a large one. Besides the Duc de Normandie, there was Madame Royale, his sister, a little girl some six and a half years older than himself, his brother the Dauphin, who had the advantage of him by four years, and his baby sister, who was born in July 1786, and lived not quite twelve months. Until the death of the first Dauphin in 1789, Louis-Charles was, of course, only a second and less valued son, since royalty may not treat its children with the impartial affection possible to humbler parents. It is inevitable and necessary that the eldest son of a king should be his most important child, probably the best loved, certainly the most carefully watched and guarded; and it is for this reason not to be wondered at, that when the first Dauphin developed symptoms of a fatal and disfiguring disease, there was a sudden access of interest on the part both of his family and the



LOUIS XVI

*From a painting by Callet at Versailles*

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court, in the person of the little Duc de Normandie, the next in succession.

Physically he was as strong as his poor elder brother was feeble, and, as the one young Prince sank gradually into crippled invalidism, the other increased steadily in health. Louis-Charles was a handsome child, tall and straight, with light brown hair that hung in curls on his shoulders and the fine, clear colour that was Marie-Antoinette's greatest charm. His eyes, too, were blue like his mother's, and he had her dimpled chin. It is said that he combined the royal appearance of the Queen with the amiable look of the good-natured Louis, and that his charm of person and manner was felt by all who approached him. He was a very active, agile little person, a true boy, fond of running and jumping, afraid of nothing, and eager to risk his life and limbs in dare-devil attempts to show his childish strength and skill.

He was healthy, too, "a true peasant's child, tall, red-cheeked, and fat," except for a period in his babyhood when he suffered from convulsions. It is about this malady that a curious story is told. It seems that his doctor decided it was necessary for the relief of his complaint that leeches should be applied behind the baby's ears. The royal governess, the Duchesse de Polignac, fearing lest this operation might prove very harrowing to the feelings of so tender-hearted

a mother as Marie-Antoinette, decided not to tell her anything about it. Writing to the King, she asked his consent to this well-meaning deception. He agreed, and came himself to witness the application, which was quite successful. As it chanced, however, the Queen suddenly arrived in the room, saw the traces of blood, and, in terrible alarm, demanded furiously what they were doing to her baby. It is easy to picture the very human scene—the baby Prince crying, fat King Louis standing by helpless and troubled, the frightened and angry mother accusing them, very likely, of trying to murder her child, and the governess vainly endeavouring to soothe her ruffled mistress, pacify the baby, and make explanations. Of course the matter was settled amicably in the end, but at the moment it almost led to the dismissal of the royal favourite.

The post of Governess to the Children of France, which the Duchesse de Polignac came near losing, was one held in high esteem and was a very influential one at court. The Duchesse de Polignac had gained it in 1782, thanks to the fact that she was one of Marie-Antoinette's prime favourites; but it was a choice very unpopular with the people, who disliked her intensely, and cried out angrily, when she was appointed, "Shall the heir for whom we have waited so long be educated by a Polignac?"



The children had, besides, the Abbé d'Avaux for their instructor, a man who, though not very learned, possessed the far greater merit of being able to make himself attractive to children, so that the simple lessons he gave his royal pupils seemed more like play to them than tasks. The King and Queen, however, gave, both of them, much time and attention to the boy's education.

It was Marie-Antoinette who gave him his first lessons in reading. She also gave him little music-lessons, playing for him on the harpsichord simple airs with a pretty melody, which she had composed or learned specially for him. She used sometimes, too, to sing to him, in the voice which Madame Le Brun said, rather cruelly, was not always in tune. The little Prince, however, was not so critical as the portrait-painter, and used to listen in fascination to her songs. Once, indeed, he sat so still that his aunt, Madame Elisabeth, accused him of having been asleep. At this he looked at her with hurt astonishment.

"Could any one sleep," he asked solemnly, "when Mamma-Queen is singing?"

There is no doubt that the Queen was immensely proud of her child. A naïve and charming letter, which she wrote about him in 1789, and which the MM. de Goncourt pub-

lished for the first time in their *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette*, runs as follows:—

“My son is to-day aged four years, four months, and two days. I say nothing of his looks; it is only necessary to see him. His health has always been good, even in the cradle, but we noticed from the first that his nerves were very sensitive, and the least noise made an impression on him. He was a little late with his first teeth. . . .

“Like all strong, healthy children, he is high-spirited, violent in his anger, and rather thoughtless; but he is a good child, and is tender and affectionate when his vivacity does not carry him away. He has an unbounded *amour-propre*, which may one day turn out to his advantage. . . . He is very faithful when he has promised a thing, but he is extremely indiscreet, he repeats easily anything he may have heard, and often, without meaning to lie, he adds what he has seen in his imagination to what he has seen with his eyes; this is his greatest fault, and one which we must correct. Otherwise, I repeat—he is a good child, and with firmness, but not too much severity, we can make what we wish of him. Severity makes him revolt, for he has a great deal of character for his years. For example, since his babyhood, the word ‘pardon’ has always shocked

him ; he will do or say anything that is asked of him when he has committed a fault, but the word 'pardon' he cannot pronounce except with tears and infinite pain.

"My children," the Queen goes on, "have always been taught to have confidence in me, and when they have done wrong to come and tell me themselves. In scolding them I have the air of being more grieved than angry. I have accustomed them to the idea that a 'yes' or 'no' from me is irrevocable, but I always give them a reason which they can understand, so that they shall not suppose it caprice on my part. My son does not yet know how to read, and learns slowly ; he is too flighty to apply himself to lessons. He has no idea of haughtiness in his head, and I trust this will continue. Our children learn soon enough who they are.

"He loves his sister dearly ; whenever anything pleases him, whether it is some excursion or some gift, his first impulse is to ask that his sister may have the same. He was born gay. He needs to be much in the open air, for the sake of his health, and I am glad to have him play and work in the garden."

This garden of which his mother writes acted a very important part in the young Prince's childhood. The King, who was himself an expert locksmith, wished that his son should also learn

a trade, and so provided the little boy with a plot of ground near the château at Versailles, and supplied him with all sorts of miniature tools, spades, rakes, watering-pots, and so on. Put under the tutelage of excellent gardeners, he flung himself delightedly into his father's scheme, and was soon able to tend his little garden unaided. With boyish gallantry, he liked to fancy his sole interest in this fascinating new plaything lay in the fact that it gave him an opportunity to pay pretty attentions to his mother by offering her a daily bouquet of his own raising. Every morning, his first act on getting up was to run out to his garden, escorted only by his dog Moufflet and a serving-woman, to pick the bunch of flowers which was to be laid on the Queen's dressing-table before she got up.

It is a truism that children in very high places are always reputedly beautiful and good and wise, and Louis-Charles's reputation was like all the rest. His beauty, however, was certainly not exaggerated; we have the best of proofs of it in the portraits by Madame Le Brun. Of his goodness there is more room for doubt, and it does not seem likely that he was one of those unpleasant creatures, a saintly child. Indeed, the very healthiness that helped to make him beautiful also made him lively and mis-

chievous, and inclined—as the more candid of his historians admit—to be impatient with the women who had to deal with him at such trying moments as bed-time. He was, however, fair and honourable, and ready to accept the punishments which his childish indiscretions earned for him.

M. de Beauchesne, who has collected a mass of anecdotes about his childhood, recounts how one day he robbed of his flute a young page who was accompanying him on a walk, and hid the instrument in a tree in the garden. Learning of this escapade, the Queen decided to give him his punishment by proxy. Taking Moufflet, his little pet dog, she shut it up in a dark room alone. Naturally enough, the animal howled plaintively, and every howl cut the heart of his erring master. Finally, the little Prince ran to Marie-Antoinette in tears. “It is I who stole the flute, not Moufflet,” he told her, “so please set him free and put me in his place.” This wish was carried out, and, on emerging from his imprisonment, Louis-Charles’s first act was to go find the flute and give it back.

Of his childish quickness of mind we have many instances, and there are scores of repartees and sallies attributed to him, some of them, however, so brilliant that it is difficult to

believe the child's conversation was not sometimes gilded by those who repeated it. One example of his quick wit, reported by Madame Campan, we have no reason to doubt. Marie-Antoinette, it happened, was hearing Madame Royale repeat a history lesson, and the young Princess could not for the moment recollect the name of the Queen of Carthage. The boy, it chanced, knew the name, and was vexed and impatient at his big sister's forgetfulness and anxious to help her out. Finally he bethought himself of the experiment of saying to her—though he never, as a rule, spoke to her in the second person singular—"But *dis donc*" (in French the pronunciation of this phrase and that of the name of Dido are practically the same) "the name of the Queen to mamma; *dis donc*, what her name was!"

Not always so wise as on this occasion, the lad sometimes muddled his ideas very badly in the quaint fashion peculiar to children, as on the day when he insisted on pushing his way through a prickly rose-bush, giving as his reason—explained with a most noble and lofty air—that "Thorny paths lead to glory." It is said he was much chagrined when Marie-Antoinette showed him how absurdly he had misapplied the proverb.

Meanwhile, as the little Prince was growing

up happy and well-beloved in the château at Versailles, and in his miniature garden on the terrace, the clouds of the Revolution were gathering dense and black over his head. Even at the time of his birth France was full of dissatisfaction with royal institutions and dislike for Marie-Antoinette. A year later, at St. Cloud, she made pathetic attempts to reclaim her popularity, and showed herself continually in the gardens, in the company of her children, but with no better result than that the people greeted her attempts with ridicule, and used to exclaim, as a sort of contemptuous catchword, "Let us go see the fountains and the Austrian," while the poor Queen, the Austrian, walked among her scornful subjects proud and cold, with a haughtiness that was itself a further offence. When the Duc de Normandie was three, there fell upon France the terrible winter of 1788, when the Seine was frozen over and the cold more intense than it had been for eighty years. The sufferings of the people were horrible, and day by day the great revolt drew nearer.

Finally, Louis XVI. assembled the States-General, which met for the first time since 1614. The little Prince was then just past four. With his sister, he watched from the windows of a house in Versailles the procession that celebrated the opening, while the only part

in the pageant possible to his elder brother—by this time crippled and helpless and almost at the end of his sufferings—was to lie on cushions on the balcony of the Petite Écurie and look at the procession. Just a month later, this unhappy little life ended, and after eight years, some of them passed in great pain, Louis-Joseph-Xavier-François, heir of France, died on June 4, 1789. Within two hours of the death, the Revolution began to exhibit its disregard, not merely of Royalty, but of the ordinary considerations of humanity. A deputation of the Tiers-État wished to see the King on business, and, with a heartless lack of common decency, insisted on being received at once, although Louis was at the moment much broken by his bereavement, and was shut up alone in his private apartment. At first the King declined to see them at such a time, but at last, with characteristic weakness, he yielded, only asking pathetically, as he admitted the tactless intruders, “Are there, then, no fathers amongst them?”

Immediately on the death of the first Dauphin, Louis-Charles succeeded to his title and pretensions, and entered forthwith upon what was to be one of the most romantic and probably quite the saddest career in the history of France. It was a great change in the life of the little Prince, this leaping in a day from the uninter-



esting and unimportant position of younger son, a prospective "Monsieur," to that of Dauphin of France, heir to the oldest kingdom in Europe. "He is a very fine child, and the greatest hopes are held for him," says a letter-writer of the time. —Poor little Prince! we know how they were destined to be fulfilled. Within six weeks, on the 14th July 1789, the Bastille had surrendered, and with the force of its fall monarchy trembled at its foundations. This was the first great event of the Revolution. It has been called the first step up Louis's scaffold. It was also the opening move in the tragedy that robbed the Dauphin of his parents, his throne, and perhaps his life.

## CHAPTER III

### THE LAST OF VERSAILLES

THE intensely important political results of the fall of the Bastille probably seemed to the Dauphin quite negligible compared with something else which the catastrophe brought about, and which, at his tender age, touched him far more closely than could all the politics in the world. This was a change of governesses which followed immediately on the popular uprising. No sooner had the great prison fallen than the Duchesse de Polignac, always very unpopular, and a woman who had done more in the past years than any other person to bring Marie-Antoinette into disfavour, found her position at Court too dangerous to be maintained any longer, and, at the command of her friend and mistress, slipped away secretly one night from the palace, and emigrated. Thus the first injury that the Revolution did the little Prince was to rob him of his governess; and that, perhaps, was not an injury after all, for the lady who replaced the Queen's favourite was a woman in many ways Madame de Polignac's superior.



MARIE ANTOINETTE AND HER CHILDREN

*From a painting by Madame Vigée Lebrun at Versailles*



This new governess was the Marquise de Tourzel, afterwards the Duchesse de Tourzel. Her husband had been the Grand Prévôt of France, and had been killed not long before in an accident while hunting with the King. The distress, which the royal family naturally felt at this, gave the widow an additional claim to their interest, and when it became necessary to fill the Duchesse de Polignac's place, Marie-Antoinette had no hesitation in choosing Madame de Tourzel, whom she knew to be a woman of character, and one whose name, respected by all, would not arouse public prejudices and hatred as had that of "the Polignac." The post of Governess to the Children of France had at other times been counted one of the greatest honour, but in the present state of things, it was merely an opportunity for the showing of self-sacrifice and devotion. Very likely Madame de Tourzel, much saddened in her widowhood, would have declined the distinction had circumstances permitted her to consider it desirable. As it was, loyalty to her royal masters under a cloud demanded that she should accept the post, which could only be regarded as dangerous and undesirable, and the early days of August found her therefore established at Versailles.

In obedience to the Queen's orders, she gave

special attention to the Dauphin, and never lost sight of him for a moment. Her memoirs, published not long ago, are full of interesting details about his early childhood. These she was able to supply, for the double reason that she was his constant companion up to the time of his imprisonment, and that—thanks to her character, which combined a keen sense of humour with firmness and a kindly disposition—she was exactly the sort of person to win the affection and confidence of a little child.

Meanwhile, as the Dauphin and his sister were making friends with their new governess, public events and misfortunes were moving on swiftly. As soon as the Bastille fell, it was deemed advisable that the King should pay a visit to Paris, a thing which, in the upset conditions of the time, was fraught with much danger. The trip from Versailles to Paris was made on the 17th July, and Marie-Antoinette, who was left behind at the château, passed the day in the most terrible anxiety. It is not difficult to sympathise with this when we recollect that Louis himself had viewed the journey with so much apprehension that he had spent much of the night before putting his papers in order, had gone to confession and communion in the morning, and, as he left Versailles, had said a most touching farewell

to his family and appointed the Comte de Provence regent in case of his detention in Paris.

All day long messengers were passing between the city and Versailles, bringing Marie-Antoinette none too quieting news of the King's reception. The poor Queen, in deepest anxiety, was prepared, should they keep her husband captive, to go to Paris to give herself up, with her children, to share his fate. With a touch of absurdity which she probably did not notice in her trouble, she passed a considerable time in rehearsing the speech she proposed making to the Assembly in the event of her having to carry out this intention. The Dauphin spent the day near his mother, trying to comfort her, and constantly running backwards and forwards to the window, so that he might be the first to announce the King's return. With his little nose pressed against the glass, he looked anxiously up the Avenue de Paris, his childish mind troubled at a situation so far beyond his understanding.

"Why," he asked in puzzled distress, "should they want to hurt papa? He is so good."—It is a question that many have asked themselves besides the four-year-old Prince, finally to come to the cynical conclusion that "they wanted to hurt" Louis for exactly the reason that, in his little son's eyes, should have protected him—that is, because he was "so good." It may

be remembered that nearly a century before, an Englishman had foretold that, if ever the French should have a king who deserved the title of a good-natured man, he would be dethroned. Good-natured Louis certainly was, and we have seen how true was the Englishman's prophecy.

At length, however, the anxious hours were over, and in the evening Louis returned safe to the château. Marie-Antoinette and the children flung themselves into his arms, Versailles was full of rejoicing, and the two brothers congratulated one another that the Comte de Provence's regentship had been the shortest and most peaceful in the annals of France. It is difficult to believe, however, that the admittedly ambitious and unscrupulous Comte de Provence would not in his secret heart have been glad to try his hand at a temporary regentship.

It was something over two months after this trying day that a detachment of soldiers, the Flanders regiment, was brought to Versailles to help maintain order, for the famished and disturbed condition of the people led them to the committing of all sorts of outrages. To this arrival of the Flanders regiment is due indirectly the second great outbreak of the Revolution the terrible time of the 5th and 6th October 1789.



It had long been customary in the French army to give a banquet to any regiment that came to a town. In deference to this custom an entertainment, or rather a series of entertainments, was given on an extravagant scale to welcome this new regiment to Versailles. At one of these banquets the King and Queen and the Dauphin were present, and were greeted with the greatest enthusiasm by the soldiers. This news of gaiety and of the prodigal wasting of food and wine while people were starving, added to the rumours that reached Paris to the effect that the nation's health had not been drunk at the banquet, and royalist sentiments had been expressed and white royalist cockades worn, aroused the greatest dissatisfaction in hungry Paris.

On the 5th October this dissatisfaction blazed up into a sort of revolt. The poor, half-starved women of Paris gathered together in a body, and armed with flails, pikes, swords, and muskets, preceded by drums, and trailing a pair of ammunitionless cannon, they set off for Versailles, to set their grievances before the King.

Naturally enough news of the approach of this alarming mob reached Versailles some time before the women themselves arrived. During the course of the day, while the King was out hunting and Marie-Antoinette was

sitting—for the last time in her life, as it chanced—in her beloved gardens at Trianon, and horses were standing ready harnessed to take the Dauphin for a drive, the terrifying news came that an army of market-women and ruffians was marching towards Versailles, with the supposed intention of attacking the château.

At first it was proposed to take energetic measures of defence, but Louis, afraid, as always, of shedding blood, declined, and insisted that the army should be permitted to come on without opposition. At six o'clock, in a heavy fog, the women arrived at Versailles, and demanded to see the King. Louis received a deputation of them, and treated them so gently and sympathetically that they were completely won over, and left him, crying out as they went, "Long live the King!" This unexpected change of heart on the part of their deputation was, naturally enough, extremely astonishing and incensing to the rest of the crowd who had not seen Louis, and these latter were with difficulty restrained from making an end of what they felt to be their traitorous comrades.

During all this time Marie-Antoinette, against whom the fury of the mob was principally directed, had behaved with her usual fine cour-

age, and had given careful directions to Madame de Tourzel what she should do with the royal children in case of actual attack. Presently, calm followed the tumult, and at two o'clock the Queen felt sufficiently relieved of anxiety to go to bed and fall asleep. It was a false security.

Outdoors it rained heavily and was very dark, and now that the shops of Versailles had closed, there was nowhere for the Paris mob to go. The women were wet and hungry and aggrieved, and gradually, as the night passed, their discomfort grew to indignation, their indignation to fury. At about six in the morning, by a simultaneous impulse of rage, the different groups united and forced their way into the château, killing, as they went, two bodyguards who tried to impede them.

As they fought their passage they shouted, "Down with the Queen! The Queen's head! Down with Louis!" They rushed along the corridors of the palace, bellowing as they went, "Where is the jade? Where are you, Marie-Antoinette? You have often danced to please yourself; now you shall dance for us!" Brandishing their flails and their pikes and their sickles, they shrieked, "Let us cut her throat! Let us cut off her head! Let us eat her heart!"

There is no shadow of doubt that these threats would have been carried out<sup>1</sup> had not certain of the bodyguard and women of the Queen's service been able to wake her, to hurry her into a petticoat, and get her away just in time. Hardly was she gone, when the mad-women forced their way into her room, and, furious to find they had lost their victim, slashed her empty bed to tatters.

While the attack was being made on the Queen's room, the Dauphin was being hastily waked and dressed. In the accounts of such terrible moments as these it is not to be wondered that eye-witnesses should disagree as to details. Some tell us that, trembling for the life of his son, the King ran by a subterranean passage to the Dauphin's chamber and carried him away in his arms, that on the way the light went out, and the King ordered the lady who attended the Dauphin to catch hold of his nightshirt, so as not to become separated from him in the dark. It seems a pity to set aside this picturesque account for Madame

<sup>1</sup> The cruelty of which revolutionary mobs were capable is only too well known. In the case of the Princesse de Lamballe, for example, who was killed in the Massacres of September, unthinkable mutilations were inflicted (see Lenôtre's *Captivité et Mort de Marie-Antoinette*, where good taste has compelled the author, before quoting Daujon's account of the incident, to translate it into Latin).

de Tourzel's simple statement that, learning of the danger, she got up and carried the Dauphin to the King's apartment. At any rate the whole royal family gathered together finally in the King's rooms, and the poor little sleepy Prince said, with pathetic inappropriateness, "Mamma, I'm hungry!"—at which the Queen, unstrung, commenced to cry.

The greatest confusion reigned both within and without the château. The people cried out loudly that the King must leave Versailles and go to Paris to live. Finally, much against his will, he agreed.

All this time the fishwives were singing and dancing madly in the courtyard, and screaming out demands to see Marie-Antoinette. Yielding to their cries, the Queen went out on the balcony, holding by the hand her son and Madame Royale. "No children!" shouted the mob furiously, and the Queen, proud in her courage, sent back the Dauphin and his sister, and faced alone the crowd which meant to kill her.

Even the drunken, crazed furies were moved; there was a hush, and then, almost against their wills, they burst into a cry of "*Vive la Reine!*" Abandoned as they were by every decent quality, the poor creatures could not but admire the queenliness of the Queen they

loathed. Tears in her eyes, Marie-Antoinette left the balcony. She knew how little this hysterical enthusiasm meant, and, as she caught the Dauphin in her arms, and covered him with tears and kisses, she said sadly, "They will force us to Paris, nevertheless."

Her prediction was well founded. At half-past one, after the hastiest preparations, the royal family got into their carriage, and drove away from the Versailles to which they were never to return. In the King's room there is still to be seen his clock, which ran down a few days after their departure, and has never been set going again.

The journey to Paris was a trying ordeal. For escort they had, surrounding the carriage, soldiers, each one with a loaf of bread stuck on the point of his bayonet, ruffians armed with pikes, and drunken women with their hair hanging loose, covered with mud and blood, some sitting astride the cannon, others riding on the horses of the bodyguards, and all of them shouting and singing obscene songs. The royal family, says M. Hue, in his graphic account of the ride, could not lift up their eyes without seeing cannon pointed at their carriage. Notwithstanding their position, the King and Queen talked graciously to those of the mob who were near the carriage, saying they had always

desired the happiness of the people, and that their wishes and sentiments had been much misrepresented.

Many of the crowd, touched by this as they had been by the Queen's bravery, said frankly, "We did not know you were like this; we have indeed been deceived."

The ferocity of the rest of the crowd, however, only increased, and at a town along the route they even conceived the incredibly barbarous idea of stopping to get a barber to dress and powder the hair of the two murdered body-guards, whose severed heads they carried proudly on pikes. Every now and then the cry was raised, "No more famine! We are bringing with us the baker, the baker's wife, and the little baker's boy!" So as not to miss any of the triumph of their progress, the mob made the journey last six hours.

At last they reached Paris, to be met at the gates by Bailly, the mayor, who exclaimed, with a want of tact that must have seemed cruel to the royal party, "What a happy day, Sire, is this that brings your Majesty and your family to Paris!"

What a happy day indeed! With further lack of consideration, Bailly urged that the King should go into the Hôtel de Ville for some sort of welcoming ceremony, and tired though they were,

the royal family was forced to yield. So fatigued, indeed, was the little Dauphin, that he slept in the arms of his governess through all the speeches.

Finally, well into the evening, the royal family, miserable and worn-out, arrived at the Tuileries, thereafter to be their home. The palace had hardly been occupied since 1655—that is, for nearly 135 years—and no preparations had been made for their coming. Needless to say, therefore, the furniture was tottering on its legs, the carpets in rags.

“Everything is very ugly here,” said the sleepy little Dauphin as he entered the palace.

“My son,” answered Marie-Antoinette bravely, for she must have found the dismal, stuffy rooms a melancholy refuge after her awful day, “Louis XIV. lived here contentedly; we should not be more difficult to please than he.”

The Dauphin spent the night in an unguarded room, the doors of which, warped, would barely shut. Faithful Madame de Tourzel barricaded them with what little furniture she could find, and passed the hours seated by the side of his bed.

Such was the first night spent by Louis-Charles, Dauphin of France, in his “good city of Paris.”



## CHAPTER IV

### TWENTY MONTHS AT THE TUILERIES

“THE baker, his wife, and the baker’s boy” were in Paris, and for some few days their presence, so rudely gained, seemed to bring calm to the troubled populace, hope to the hungry. Even in the beginning, however, there occurred every now and again alarming incidents. On the morning after their arrival, they waked to find the courts and terraces of the Tuileries filled with a great crowd of people, shouting out that they wanted to see the King and his family. Hearing the tumult, the Dauphin ran and threw himself into Marie-Antoinette’s arms, crying out, “*Grand Dieu, maman !* Is it going to be yesterday over again ?” The constant crowds outside the palace kept shifting and renewing themselves for days, going away at night and coming back again in the morning, as if the royal family inside the long-disused château were some particularly interesting exhibits at a Zoo. Over and over again, the royal family were forced to show themselves to the crowd, some of whom were

merely curious or genuinely interested, and others moved by the unkind motive of a wish to jeer at the royalty they had conquered and led home captive.

All this, the attack on his old home, the sudden moving to the new palace and the strange and terrible behaviour of the people, puzzled the little Prince exceedingly. One day, shortly after the arrival in Paris, he went to his father, and, looking up pensively at the big King, said he had something very serious to ask of him. Why, he asked, were his father's people, who had formerly loved him so well, all at once so angry with him? Had his father done anything to hurt them?

Louis, always well disposed, lifted the little boy on his knees and spoke to him in words that have come down to us as follows:<sup>1</sup>—

“I wished, child, to render my people still happier than they were. I wanted money to pay expenses occasioned by wars. I asked my people for money, as my predecessors had always done, but the members who made up the Parliament opposed this, and said that my people alone had the right to decide on such a measure. I assembled the principal inhabitants of every town at Versailles—that is what is called the States-General. When they were

<sup>1</sup> Madame Campan, “Private Life of Marie-Antoinette.”

assembled, they required concessions of me which I could not make, either with due respect to myself or with justice to you who will be my successor. Wicked men have induced the people to rise, and brought about the excesses of the last few days. We must not blame the people for them."

It is indeed no wonder that the child was astonished at the changes he saw all about him. The condition of the royal family was in many ways like that of prisoners. Wherever the King went he was followed, even if it was to go to Mass, by a chief of division; the Queen and the Dauphin had for guards leaders of battalion, the rest of the family had only captains. Usually these guards were polite, but now and again one of them would find himself carried away by his novel position, and would dare to be familiar.

The little Prince was taught that he ought to be as affable as possible to all these people, and to all Parisians whom he met, and he took great pains to carry out these instructions. One time, when he had found an opportunity to make a particularly gracious reply to some member of the Commune, he came and whispered proudly in his mother's ear, "Was that right?" As might be supposed, the manner of life at the Tuileries was very different from the ceremonious state

kept up at Versailles. The Queen<sup>st</sup> still held Court, but infrequently, and the courtiers of misfortune<sup>es</sup> were very few. No one had any heart for gaiety. In the morning the Queen saw her children and went to Mass; at one o'clock she dined with her family, excepting little Louis-Charles, and afterwards played billiards with Louis, and did needlework. In the evening, Monsieur and Madame (the Comte de Provence and his wife) came to supper. By eleven every one was in bed.

The lack of Court gaieties, of course, made very little difference to the Dauphin, who had still his sister to play with, and the same governess and tutor to instruct him. What he missed most in the change from Versailles to Paris was his little garden. Finally Louis, seeing how real was the child's grief at the loss of his favourite toy, conceived the idea of giving him another garden, and a small piece of ground was set aside for his use in the Tuileries grounds, on the banks of the Seine. It was with transports of delight that he took possession of his new garden, and set himself to growing his flowers again and to raising rabbits. In this garden of his he used to receive, with the royal graciousness which he had already acquired, poor women and their children who came to tell him their troubles, and

to whom he often made presents of money and flowers of his own raising. He had been brought up to be charitable by the mother who is said to have suggested the poor should eat cake since they had no bread, and he used to put away the greater part of his pocket-money in a little chest, so as always to be ready to satisfy demands made on his sympathy.

On his daily visits to his garden Louis-Charles was escorted by a detachment of soldiers, a proceeding which flattered his vanity exceedingly. He used to make his progress from the château to the terrace full of miniature self-importance, and smiling with delight and pride; and used to invite the soldiers inside his garden, show them his rabbits, and present them with little nosegays. One day the escort was so numerous that it was plain they would not be able to fit into the garden, a misfortune which greatly distressed him.

It is not hard to imagine the oft-chronicled charm of the lad from the scraps of anecdote which we find recorded. Evidently, like other healthy boys, he had a tremendous admiration for soldiers, and was, needless to say, charmed with the idea—thought of at about that time—of forming a regiment of children, to be named after him, the Royal-Dauphin. This regiment was established with the Dauphin as its honorary

Colonel, and soon grew to be very large. The little soldiers wore uniforms that were the exact miniature of those of the French Guards, from white gaiters to three-cornered hat.

It must not be supposed, however, that Louis-Charles was always a model child. His chief failing seems to have been a tendency to fall into tantrums. One day he got into a temper with Madame de Tourzel. "If you don't do what I want," said he, with childish tyranny, "I will cry so loud that they will hear me on the terrace, and then what will they say?"

The governess refused to be intimidated. "They will say you are a bad child," she answered coldly.

"And if my crying makes me ill?" continued the enterprising youngster.

"Then I shall put you to bed and feed you on invalid's diet."

Forthwith, the small Prince set himself to screaming and kicking the floor and making a great commotion. Without a word to him, Madame de Tourzel gave orders to prepare his bed and cook some *bouillon* for his supper. At this the Dauphin suddenly stopped his crying, looked at her wisely, and said, "I was only trying to see how far you would let me go; I see I shall have to obey you, after all." Next day he remarked to the Queen, "Do

you know whom you have given me for governess?—It is Madame Sevère.”

Another day, he tried to play much the same trick on one of the other ladies, whose reply was more diplomatic even than Madame de Tourzel's. For no reason at all, he had thrown himself into a fury. The lady looked at him disapprovingly. “How foolish you are, Monsieur le Dauphin!” said she. “You are a prince, and all the world has its eyes on you. And now they will say you have gone mad.” This hint produced an immense impression on him, and it is said that after that the tantrums took place no more.

By New Year the royal family had been at the Tuileries about three months. The Dauphin celebrated the holiday after a novel fashion, by suddenly announcing that he had learned to read, as a sort of New Year's present to his mother. This feat he had accomplished after great previous laziness, by the self-imposed means of a daily double lesson.

Not long after Louis-Charles had so distinguished himself, there followed a day of much political importance. This was the 4th February 1790, when the King formally accepted the new constitution, making at the same time the following promise:—

“In concert with the Queen, who shares my

sentiments, I will educate my son in accordance with the new order of things ; and I will teach him that a wise constitution will save him from the dangers of inexperience." Two days later a Parisian letter-writer said, " Monsieur le Dauphin has been heard to state very plainly that he will never be an aristocrat."

If there was any connection between the King's promise and his son's announcement, which is most unlikely, it must be admitted that Louis had been sowing the promised seed with most uncharacteristic swiftness.

It was determined to hold a celebration in honour of the new constitution on the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, that is, on July 14, 1790. This was to be held on the Champ de Mars, where a huge amphitheatre was dug out, large enough to accommodate more than 250,000 spectators. So great was the popular enthusiasm of the moment, and so short the time allowed for the task, that not only workmen plied their spades on the Champ de Mars, but all sorts of other people—soldiers and women, monks and students, and even ladies who drove up to the scene of labour in their carriages. One day the King himself, on a visit of inspection, asked for a wheelbarrow, threw into it some shovelfuls of earth and, wheelbarrow in hand, continued his progress,



amid the acclamations of the crowd.<sup>1</sup> People seem to have done their share in the digging out of the amphitheatre for the Fête de la Fédération in much the same spirit in which the ardently religious join in pious pilgrimages to holy shrines.

At last the great day arrived, and—it was nature's omen for the future of the constitution—rain fell in torrents, and the spectators were forced to watch the ceremony from under their umbrellas. While the King was taking his oath Marie-Antoinette lifted up the Dauphin in her arms, as a sign that he joined in his father's words. Afterwards, the royal family returned to the Tuileries amidst cheers.

The deputations that had come to Paris from the provinces to attend the fête were all of them extremely loyal in their sentiments—very different from the Parisians, who were already full of anti-Royalist feelings. It is said, indeed, that if Louis had had the initiative to take advantage of the devotion of the provincials to himself and his family, the political situation might even then have been saved.

The Dauphin was particularly popular with these country-folk. One day, standing on a balcony near which were a quantity of these

<sup>1</sup> According to a contemporary newspaper, quoted in Miss MacLehoses's "From the Monarchy to the Republic in France."

people, he amused himself picking off the leaves of a lilac-bush. One of the *fédérés* asked the child to give them to him, that he might keep them all his life. Immediately every *fédéré* wished for a like remembrance, and in a few moments the bush was stripped of its leaves. Again, they wished to visit the little Prince's garden, and their request was granted on condition that they would go into it a few at a time, so as not to tire the child by crowding upon him at his play-hour. He took this opportunity to talk to them in his engaging fashion, and the *fédérés* were delighted with him. "You must come some day to Dauphiné," said the deputation from that province, feeling a particular interest in the Dauphin, while the Normands begged him not to forget he had also borne the name of their province, and that Normandy would always be faithful to him.

After the *fédérés* had departed for their homes, the royal family returned to St. Cloud, to resume the holiday which had been interrupted by the fête, for the Tuileries was a very disagreeable residence in the hot weather, and they had been glad to leave it at the end of May. They were all happier in the freedom of the country, and Louis-Charles in particular increased every day in strength and sprightliness. It was during this holiday-time that he amused his family very

much on the subject of the regiment called the Dauphin-Dragon; quite a different affair, of course, from the child's regiment, the Royal-Dauphin. The Colonel of this former regiment wrote to Madame de Tourzel to present its regrets that it could not come before the Dauphin on the occasion of its visit to Paris. This attention delighted the little boy.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he cried. "Isn't it fine to have a regiment at my age! And should not I like to see it!"

The governess inquired what reply she should send to the Colonel on his behalf. The child was uncertain. "You answer for me," said he.

"I will say, then," said she teasingly, "that Monseigneur le Dauphin, not knowing what to say at his age, will reply when he is bigger."

"Oh, how naughty you are!" he cried angrily. "And what will my regiment think of me?"—and forthwith he commenced to beat the air furiously with his feet and hands—evidently his reform from the tantrums was liable to a relapse now and then. Finally, seeing that Madame de Tourzel only laughed at his rage, he calmed himself, looked at her severely, and said, "Very well; I will make my own answer, since you do not care to help me. Say to the Colonel that I thank him, and that I would have loved to see my regiment and put myself at its head."

Then, seeing that every one approved of his answer, his childish vanity was appeased, and he kissed the governess and thanked her. Madame de Tourzel, who tells of this incident, concludes her story by the reflection that her young charge was a thorough Bourbon.

It was in February of the following year, when Louis-Charles was nearly six, that conditions became so troubled as to lead his great-aunts, Mesdames Adélaïde and Victoire, to leave France. This in itself aroused much popular dissatisfaction, the more so that the rumour got about that these ladies were carrying the Dauphin away with them, and that another child of the same age was to be substituted for him and presented to the public in his place. This suspicion was, of course, unfounded, but the people credited it and became so wrought-up that, on February 24, the populace swarmed into the Tuileries garden and attempted to get into the château, to assure themselves that the Dauphin was really there.

Preposterous as this idea was, however, it has survived even to the present day, and only recently an article in the *Nouvelle Revue* attempted to show that the royal child did indeed leave his parents at about that time, and subsequently appeared in Canada under the name of Rion, while thenceforward a substitute Dauphin whom

he left behind him played his part. It is scarcely necessary to say that there is every proof that this is a fable, but, at the time, such a suspicion was quite sufficient to excite a nation just then only too ready to be excited.

It was at about this time that the Assembly passed the decree by which the title of King was removed from Louis and, instead, that of "First Public Functionary" bestowed on him, while to the Dauphin was given the title of "First Substitute," and to the Queen that of "Mother of the First Substitute." Imagine proud Marie - Antoinette calling herself the "Mother of the First Substitute"!

Another episode, though a trifling one, showed how eager was the desire to insult royalty. This was when Palloi, the architect at the head of the work of pulling down the Bastille, came one day to the Tuileries expressly to present to the Dauphin a set of dominoes made from the stones of that great prison. Naturally enough, such a gift could only be painful to royalty, and was indeed only less suitable a present to offer the young Prince than would have been a toy carved from the bones of his ancestors. Even the child felt the cruel impropriety of it, and when Palloi, to make matters worse, remarked that the dominoes would serve to remind him of the generosity with which his father had renounced all idea of

despotism, the Dauphin blushed, and with difficulty made the reply that had been dictated to him in advance.

Perhaps, however, the incident which proved beyond anything else how helpless and insignificant was become the position of royalty was the affair at Easter, 1791. The King, fearing that he would not be able to fulfil in Paris the religious exercises suitable to the season, had determined to go with his family to St. Cloud for a fortnight, and had made all his preparations to leave the Tuileries on Holy Monday. His whole household had already preceded him to St. Cloud, and his dinner was prepared there in expectation of his coming.

The royal family got into a carriage at about one o'clock, and attempted to start. Evidently, however, a suspicion had got about that this St. Cloud visit masked an attempt on their part to emigrate from France. No sooner were they ready to set off than the National Guard revolted, caught the horses by the heads, and declared the King should not go, while the people who stood by applauded them. In vain Louis stuck his head out of the carriage window and uttered the just complaint, "It is strange that, after having given liberty to the nation, I am refused it myself." The crowd, notwithstanding his protest, declined to permit his departure, and some of

the King's faithful adherents were ill-treated ; and finally, convinced that they could not leave the Tuileries without considerable danger, the royal family gave up the humiliating contest and re-entered the château. It was a great disappointment to the Dauphin to be forced thus to give up this country outing, for which, very likely, he had made many childish plans.

"How naughty all these people are," he exclaimed to Madame de Tourzel and his tutor, "to cause papa so much pain, when he is so good!" A moment later, he had flung himself down on a sofa and picked up aimlessly a story-book. Opening it at random, his eyes rested on some story about a little prisoner. Quickly he picked himself up and went to his tutor. "See the book that has fallen into my hands to-day," said he significantly, and the governess could not help crying that he, so young, should feel the force of such a coincidence.

From the time of the frustrated Easter visit, the unhappiness of the royal family's condition was redoubled. Prisoners in a château that was guarded like a gaol, friendless in the midst of a hostile people, abandoned and helpless, their position was at once melancholy and dangerous. Here, somewhat condensed, is M. Lenôtre's account of how Paris treated its King: At all the doors of the château were National Guards,

suspicious and troublesome; sentinels were at each of the approaches to the garden and along the terrace by the river, standing a hundred paces apart. Six hundred *sectionnaires* surrounded the palace; they patrolled the courts, the stairs, the apartments, the kitchens. One of these men, placed at night in surveyance of a passage, received, he recounts, the command to abstain from sneezing, so thin was the partition that separated him from the Queen's bed; to avoid his making a noise by moving about, he was furnished with a chair, that he might mount guard seated.

No wonder that at last Louis, driven desperate, roused himself and determined to use strong measures to escape from his kingdom, which, no longer content to be ruled, had now changed places with its king, had made him subject and itself monarch.



## CHAPTER V

### FLIGHT TO VARENNES

IN June 1791, there took place what was to France one of the most important episodes in her history, and to Louis and his son the turning-point of their careers. This was that tragically mismanaged affair, the flight to Varennes. For fifteen months past there had been under consideration plans for the royal family to leave the country secretly, and at the time when the Easter visit to St. Cloud was so harshly resisted by the Paris mob, a project was well matured by which the King and his family should escape from the Tuileries and flee to Montmédy, near the Belgian frontier and the royal allies. From there Louis hoped to be able to treat with his rebellious kingdom with a dignity impossible while he was to all intents a prisoner in their midst. Needless to say the frustrated Easter visit, proving as it did that his kingship existed by courtesy alone—and very little of that—served but to strengthen his determination to escape as early as possible from a position at once humiliating and dangerous.

The disastrous result of this flight was one of the saddest incidents in poor Louis's life. To his son it was even more than this; on the results of the journey to Varennes hinged all his fate. Louis was temperamentally marked for ruin, he had failure written plain across his brow. Not so his bright heir; to the Dauphin temporary escape from his troubled kingdom opened a world of possibilities. His capture at Varennes shut for ever the door of his prison.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the importance of this episode. Its influence on French history, and therefore on that of the world, was enormous; few other incidents have ever had such mighty consequences. Had the flight to Varennes been a success instead of a failure, had Louis and his son escaped from under the heavy hand of the Assembly, the history of Europe in two centuries would have been changed. With Louis safe over the frontier, there could have been no execution of the royal family, no Reign of Terror, no Napoleon, no Empire, no Waterloo, and no restoration; and, finally, no poor little Dauphin languishing in the Temple. It is a useless, but very interesting pursuit to wonder what other events would have replaced these that I have named; but certain it is they must have been replaced somehow, and equally certain is it that the far-reaching events

of those few days are felt even into the present. Who shall say that if the King had joined his allies in 1791, France would not to-day be ruled by Bourbon descendants of Louis XVII.?

The flight to Varennes has, however, another and a more human side than that of mere historic importance. It is perhaps unique among the incidents of history in its power to reveal by the events of a few hours the innermost characters of its actors. To understand Louis and Marie-Antoinette, that unhappy couple who would have made, in other spheres, an estimable locksmith and a blameless and delightful lady in society, but who were tragically unsuited to rule a great country in times of intense turmoil, we have only to study the series of foolish mistakes that wrecked their plans of escape. It is astonishing that the happenings of five days could so clearly epitomise the characteristics of two lifetimes. True it is, however, that during that brief period Louis and his Queen were what historic characters—like their humbler fellow-beings—so frequently decline to be, perfectly consistent with themselves. Every act of the melancholy fiasco reveals the King as he was, a mixture of weakness and obstinacy and shyness, with that extraordinary capacity for lying down under difficulties that has justly been called a “strenuous inertia,” and the abhorrence of bloodshed, but for

which he might have spared his own blood and that of thousands of his countrymen ; it equally reveals the Queen with her lack of judgment and her magnificent royal courage and devotion, and that curiously tragic obsession of hers that made her do almost invariably the wrong thing at the wrong time.

It was Marie-Antoinette who, with the help of her devoted friend Comte Axel de Fersen, was responsible for arranging most of the details of the flight. Long before the date set for the departure, Fersen devoted himself, of course with the greatest secrecy, to making preparations of the most minute sort. He it was who ordered that great travelling carriage, the butt of so many historians ; he who ingeniously secured passports, and studied out, post by post, the route the royal family was to follow ; and he who consulted with the Marquis de Bouillé and the Duc de Choiseul about the placing of troops along the road. Every day, says M. Lenôtre in his book on this subject (*Le Drame de Varennes*), Fersen went to the Tuileries to attend himself to the tiniest details, and it was he who carried out surreptitiously under his arm, bit by bit, the clothes and linen which the Queen wished to take away with her.

The day of the departure was at first fixed for June 6th, but a postponement was decided

upon for various reasons, chiefly on account of a very democratic lady-in-waiting to the Dauphin, who, it was feared, might betray them, if they attempted to escape before her period of service terminated. Another cause of delay was that the King wished to secure before he left Paris the quarterly payment of his income due at that time. All in all about a fortnight was lost, and it was not till the 21st that they were finally ready to start. Meanwhile, the greatest precautions had been taken to keep their plan secret, and, beyond a few necessary confidants, no one suspected that the royal family was actually about to run away, although for some time past there had been rumours in Paris that they were contemplating flight.

The day of the 20th was spent, outwardly, quite as usual, though inwardly the King and Queen and their few faithful friends were in a fever of impatience and anxiety. Fersen paid a final visit to the Tuileries and talked with Louis and Marie-Antoinette. All these were much affected, and the Queen wept for a long time. Madame Royale, who has left a charmingly quaint memoir of the flight, written while she was still a child, gives an account of what she saw on the day preceding the departure :—

“During the whole of the 20th June,” says

she, "my father and mother seemed very busy and much agitated, but I did not know the reason. After dinner they sent my brother and me into another room, and shut themselves up alone with my aunt (Madame Elisabeth). I have since learned it was then that they communicated to her their intention to escape. At five o'clock my mother took my brother and me and two ladies to Tivoli. While walking there my mother took me aside, and told me not to be alarmed whatever might happen; that we should never be long separated, and would meet again soon. My mind was confused, and I did not understand what she meant. She kissed me, and told me if those ladies should ask me why I was so much agitated, I should tell them she had scolded me, but that we had made it up again."

During the day the Queen gave, as usual, her orders for the morrow, and so also did Madame de Tourzel, the only other person in the château who shared the confidence of the royal family. In the evening the family supped, as was their habit, in the company of Monsieur, the King's brother, and the Comtesse de Provence, and at about ten o'clock, while the royal party was still talking, the Queen stole away to prepare her children for the flight.

The Dauphin was sound asleep. Marie-

Antoinette woke him gently, telling him he was to go to war, where he would command his regiment. No sooner did the boy hear this glowing promise than he jumped out of bed, crying enthusiastically, "Quick! quick! let us hurry. Give me my sword and my boots, and let us go!" His governess tells us that he felt he was about to enter on a career like that of Henri IV., a hero whom he had taken as his model, and that this idea so excited and charmed him that he scarcely shut his eyes during the whole of the journey to Varennes.

The children were then taken down to the Queen's apartments, where Madame Royale was dressed in a costume that had been specially prepared for the occasion, and the Dauphin was disguised in girl's clothes, in which, according to his sister, he looked "beautiful." The two children were evidently very much astonished and confused.

"What do you think we are going to do?" asked the young Princess of her brother; and he answered, "I suppose to act in a play, since we have got on these odd dresses." The poor little Dauphin must indeed have been in a sad state of bewilderment—waked in the night to be told he was going to the wars, and then, most inappropriately, to be dressed in a girl's frock. The combination of war and petticoats must

certainly have seemed a painful paradox to his childish brain.

At half-past ten the children were ready, and with Madame de Tourzel they left the château and met the Comte de Fersen, who had been waiting outside, since before nine o'clock, disguised as the driver of a public cab. The courtyard where they now found themselves was full of guards, and their danger was very great, yet they finally reached Fersen's cab in safety, and the children and their governess having got inside, the Swede mounted the box and drove away. Some time was spent in driving about the quays; then they returned by the Rue St. Honoré as far as the Rue de l'Échelle, where Fersen stopped the carriage, and they waited for the rest of the royal family to join them.

The delay was a long one, for, to avoid arousing suspicion, it was of course necessary for both the King and Queen to undress completely and get into bed as usual, and then to get up and dress again. After the carriage had waited some time, Lafayette passed, escorted by torch-bearers. The governess, in her alarm, hid the Dauphin under her skirts. The child was thoroughly terrified, and thought that the people with torches wanted to kill him.

Fersen, becoming worried at the delay, got



down off his box and commenced walking about the carriage. His disguise was so perfect that he was able to deceive another coachman, who engaged him in conversation and accepted snuff from the Count's snuff-box. Presently Madame Elisabeth arrived, and in getting into the carriage stepped on the Dauphin, who was still lying in the bottom. He had the presence of mind, however, not to cry out. Madame Elisabeth was able to reassure the anxious children and governess by telling them all was well at the château, and that their flight had not been discovered. Not long afterwards the King arrived, and finally, at about midnight, the Queen joined them, and their party was complete. The first and most dangerous stage of the flight was passed in safety. The start had been made.

After driving for some time, Fersen finally stopped the carriage at about two o'clock near the Barrière Saint-Martin, where it had been arranged that the big berlin, or travelling-carriage, was to be waiting. To their intense distress and anxiety, no signs of the carriage could be found. In the darkness—for it was a black night—the royal family saw their plans checked at the start by the failure of the great berlin to keep its appointment. The King, despite their protests, insisted on getting out to look

for the missing carriage, and at last, after many agonised moments, it was found farther along the road. Quickly the royal party transferred themselves from the cab to the berlin, Fersen placed himself on the box, between the bodyguards who had been selected to take part in the flight, and they were off.

This great berlin in which the royal family was now installed has probably met with more abuse than any other inanimate object in history. It had been ordered a long time before, through the agency of Fersen, who pretended it was wanted for use by some Russian, since to have ordered so elaborate a vehicle without explanation would have aroused suspicion. An idea of how imposing and complicated an affair it was may be gathered from the fact that the items in the bill for it—given in M. Bimbenet's book on the flight to Varennes—take up more than six printed pages. It contained all manner of contrivances and conveniences for travelling—indeed, some one or other once said of it that all it lacked to make it complete was a cathedral and an opera-house. It must be borne in mind, however, before entirely condemning the royal family for attracting dangerous attention to themselves by choosing such a carriage, that it was necessary to have a comfortable conveyance, if delicate women and little children were to travel

in it for several days, and also that a less solidly built coach would have been liable to frequent accidents. But these considerations are far from excusing the choice of the cumbersome and conspicuous berlin—the first of the many mistakes made in the course of the flight.

The list of these mistakes is a long and a sad one. Perhaps the greatest of all lay in the neglect to take along with them some experienced and resourceful man to manage affairs and captain the expedition. Fersen left them at Bondy, near Paris, and after that the King, himself unsuited to manage anything, and the three bodyguards, brave men but unused to command, were left in charge of affairs, with the most disastrous of results. The King's advisers had suggested that one M. d'Agout should accompany the royal family, but this advice was disregarded, on the plea that Madame de Tourzel claimed it as her right never to be separated from the Dauphin. The governess made it afterwards in her memoirs a particular point to deny that she had set up any such claim, and Croker, in one of his "Essays on the French Revolution," advances the opinion that Louis had merely made use of the lady's name, and that the real reason he declined M. d'Agout's services was that his *amour-propre* made him jealous of seeming in leading-strings, and

unable to manage so simple a thing as a few days' journey in a coach. The fact is, however, that the presence of a competent man accustomed to rise to emergencies, instead of sitting down underneath them, as Louis did, might have saved the expedition. Still another error of the arrangements was the selection of the bodyguards to act as couriers, work to which they were unused, and in the performance of which their inexperience caused confusion and also attracted undue notice and suspicion.

But the royal family were quite unaware of all the unpromising circumstances which surrounded their enterprise, and established comfortably inside the unlucky berlin, were full of hope and good spirits.

"When we have passed Châlons," said the King confidently, "we shall have nothing more to fear." And the whole party, says Lenôtre, felt, after the two melancholy and constricted years just past, as if they were going off on a holiday.

They distributed the rôles in accordance with the passport Fersen had managed to secure for them. It was made out in the name of Madame de Korff, a Russian lady, and it was arranged that Madame de Tourzel should assume the part of the Russian, that the King should be her steward, Madame Elisabeth her companion,

Rosalie, and that the Dauphin and his sister should be her two little girls, Amélie and Aglaé. The Queen was to be their governess. One can picture Marie-Antoinette's pleasure at this bit of comedy-acting, a reminiscence of her happy days at Versailles.

They ate their breakfast like picnickers, off bits of bread, lacking plates and forks, chuckling the while at the thought of the dismay Paris must be feeling at the discovery of their escape. From time to time the King had the imprudence to get out of the carriage, and even to talk to people in the road; and once Madame de Tourzel got out with the Dauphin and Madame Royale and walked up a hill, to give the children a little change from the long confinement in the carriage. At Chaintrix they were recognised by the postmaster while the horses were being changed, and he and his family overwhelmed them with homage. Finally, at about four in the afternoon, they arrived at Châlons, the point which would, according to Louis, mark the end of their dangers. Curiously enough it proved to be the point where the dangers commenced.

At Pont-de-Somme-Vesle, the next post-station after Châlons, it had been arranged that the royal berlin should be met by the first of a series of detachments of cavalry, which was to await it along the route and act as an escort to

Montmédy. These plans had been laid with the most minute care, and it is to the failure of the troops to connect with the King that must be laid the blame for the whole disaster. The detachment at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle was under the command of the Duc de Choiseul, and, by what seems astonishing stupidity, he failed in his mission. Alarmed by the excitement his soldiers caused in the village, and fearing from the delay in the arrival of the royal party that they had been prevented from leaving Paris at all, or had been stopped on the road, he took his troops away, leaving not even a single man to report matters to the King should he arrive.

Naturally, the royal fugitives were greatly upset to find no soldiers awaiting them, and time was lost in waiting in the hope of their arrival. Finally, however, they went on, full of anxiety and not knowing what catastrophes this failure of the troops might presage. At the next stopping-place, Sainte-Ménéhould, one of the bodyguards aroused suspicion by not knowing where the posthouse was, and Drouet, the intensely Jacobin postmaster, recognised the King from his resemblance to a portrait on the *assignats* (paper-notes). By this recognition, Drouet, as Napoleon said years afterwards, "changed the face of the world."

Full of republican zeal and desire to distinguish

himself, Drouet followed the royal berlin on horseback, intending to interrupt the flight at Clermont, the next post-station. For this he was, however, too late, but, by taking a short cut, he was able to reach Varennes almost as soon as the coach; and here at Varennes, a little town so insignificant that Paris had never heard its name, a place only a few miles from the frontier, where danger might reasonably be supposed to be at an end, the full force of the misfortunes which had gradually been accumulating ever since Choiseul's defection, burst upon the heads of the escaping royalty. Victor Hugo said that the *place* at Varennes had the shape of the blade of the guillotine beneath which three of the party were destined to die.

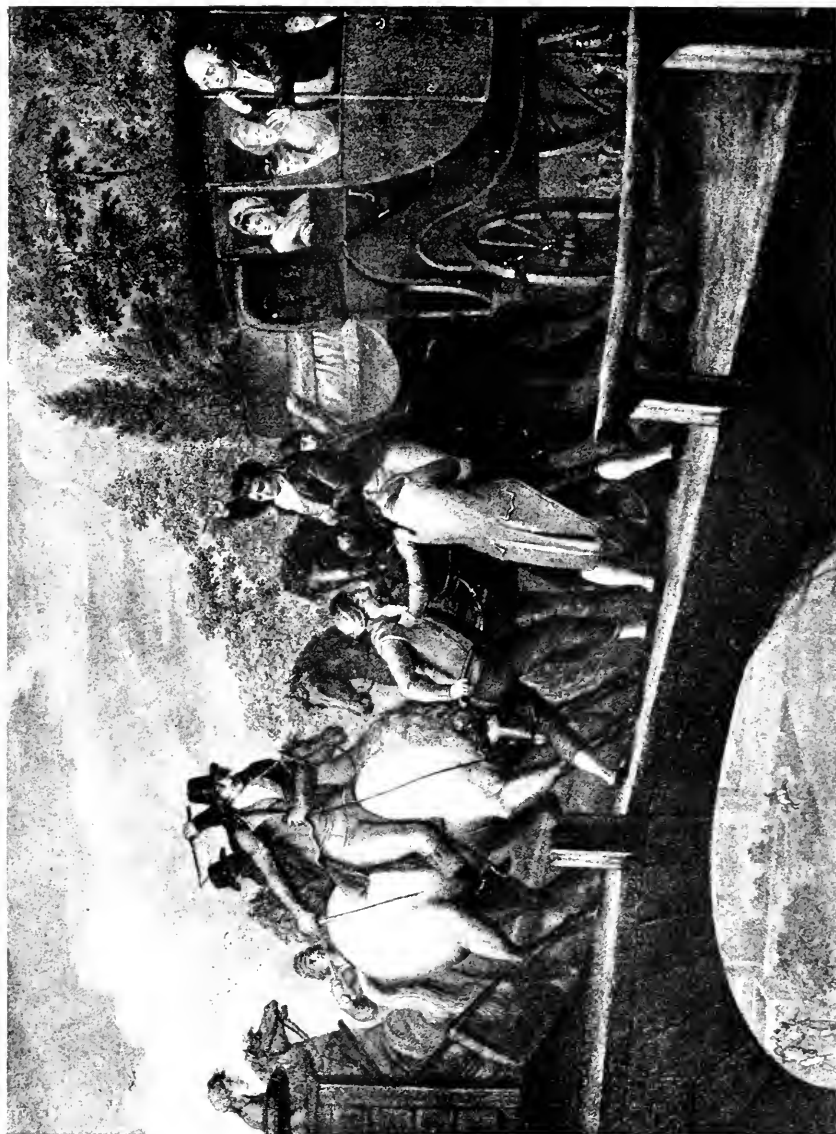
Night had come on, and notwithstanding the uneasiness of the travellers every one in the carriage had dropped into a doze. Suddenly, says Madame Royale, they were awakened by a jolt, the carriage stopped, and one of the bodyguards came to tell them they had reached Varennes, but there were no relays of horses to be found. As it chanced, Varennes had no regular posthouse, and so horses had always to be provided specially in advance. This had, of course, been attended to, and if the troops had met the royal berlin according to arrangements, word must have been given in what part of the

town the relay would be found. That no such word had come was merely the outcome of another mistake among so many that the historian has hardly courage for the gloomy task of naming them all.

The little town slept. One householder, knocked up out of his bed, could give no information as to where the horses might be found. The postillions from Clermont declined positively to overwork their horses by taking them any farther. It was a situation full of peril. Finally, the postillions were prevailed upon to drive on to the farthest inn in Varennes, there to give the horses time to rest. The berlin started on again slowly.

Suddenly there were heard shouts of "Stop! stop!" combined with threats to shoot if the carriage went any farther. The postillions were seized and dragged to the ground, and in a moment the berlin was surrounded by a crowd of excited villagers, some with arms, some with lanterns. They asked who the travellers were, and received the reply that they were "Madame de Korff and her family," but the crowd was unconvinced. Drouet had given the alarm, and the village knew Madame de Korff's family was in reality the King and Queen and the little Dauphin. Lights were thrust into the carriage close to Louis's face, and the travellers were com-





*London, Pitt, and Mar. 1793, by M. J. G. P. P. P.*

LOUIS XVI STOPPED IN HIS FLIGHT TO VARENNES

[illegible]

manded to alight. There was a moment's demur, and the guns of the crowd were levelled on the carriage. Helpless, the royal family got out into the street, and made their way to the shop of Sauce, the grocer-mayor of the town, who politely put his establishment at their disposal.

Tragedy and farce, by one of Fate's common ironies, combined ;—inside the shop Marie-Antoinette, the proudest of queens, seated amongst the parcels of soap and candles, pleaded with the wife of the humble country grocer that she should try to influence her husband to permit the flight of the King and his family. The picture is one that should make the poor Queen's friends at the same time cry and laugh.

In an upstairs room in Sauce's house the royal family established themselves. The Dauphin and his sister were put to bed, and, overcome with fatigue after travelling for twenty-four hours, they immediately fell asleep. The calm slumber of the little children formed a heartrending contrast to the agitation of their unhappy parents. The "Madame de Korff" fiction had by that time been abandoned, the King had declared himself for what he was, and had set himself to talking frankly with Sauce about the causes of his flight and what he proposed to do. Lenôtre makes the assertion, not very astonishing, in consideration of the quaintly *bourgeois* character of

Louis, that the King found in the grocer a congenial soul with whom he could discuss the affairs of his kingdom without constraint.

Meanwhile the Duc de Choiseul and his men, who had failed to meet the berlin at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle, had arrived at Varennes, and could without doubt have helped the royal family to escape and continue their journey, if Louis had been able to behave with ordinary human energy. This he did not do, however, preferring to wait in the hope of being allowed to depart peacefully, or of being relieved by Bouillé and his troops, who were not far away. A more incompetent collection of people it would be difficult to imagine: the King, with his customary fear of bloodshed, not daring to use force; the officers afraid to act without his authorisation; and even the usually so courageous Queen intimidated by fatigue—no one seeming able to realise the situation, and no one showing the moral strength to take any action; while on the grocer's bed the little Dauphin slept, and minute by minute his kingdom slipped away from him.

Presently there arrived messengers from Paris, who had been despatched as soon as the King's escape was discovered, with directions to arrest his flight.

When the King had read the decree of the Assembly, with which these messengers were

armed, he exclaimed, "There is no longer any King in France!" and laid down the paper on the bed where the children were sleeping. Marie-Antoinette, with her fine impetuosity, caught it up furiously and flung it on the ground. "It shall not sully my children!" she cried, and though the words were far from tactful, it is inspiring to see such energy in the midst of so much lackadaisical inertia.

The rest of the night passed sadly for the King and Queen, and while the children slept their parents must gradually have come to realise the hopelessness of their situation. Crowds of excited peasants from the surrounding country kept pouring into Varennes, and demanding at the top of their voices that the royal family should return to Paris. The messengers from the Assembly urged the same course. Bouillé with his troops did not appear. In vain the Queen pointed to her sleeping children, who needed rest, and one of the party simulated a sudden attack of illness to delay the departure. The populace was inexorable. "They had hearts of bronze," says Madame de Tourzel, "moved alone by fear." Finally, at about eight in the morning, the royal family, in despair, got again into their great berlin and set off, heavy-hearted, for Paris. An hour and a half later, Bouillé with his relief party reached Varennes.

The journey from Varennes to Paris was to the royal family, and especially to the Dauphin and his sister, a long torture, mental and physical. More than three times as long was consumed in returning as had been taken to come from Paris, this because the national guard of Varennes and the other towns the royal prisoners passed through insisted on accompanying them on foot, and the carriage was therefore forced to progress at a foot-pace. The weather was scorchingly hot, and the dense crowds of curious peasants who escorted the carriage pressed about it so closely as to shut out what air there was, and to raise an intolerable dust. They insisted, moreover, that the windows of the berlin should remain open, so that they might gaze without hindrance at their humiliated sovereigns. From time to time there rose up insulting cries of "*Vive la nation!*"—a rude adaptation of the old-fashioned greeting, "*Vive le roi!*" It was in the midst of this unsympathetic mob that the exhausted and disappointed family were driven in the sweltering heat till they reached Châlons.

This town had not forgotten the loyalty it had expressed in 1770, when Marie-Antoinette, as a young archduchess, had halted there on her first journey into France, and to commemorate her visit a memorial arch had been erected bearing the inscription, "May this monument

endure as long as our love." At Châlons, for the first time since they left Varennes, the royal family was treated with kindness and cordiality ; there were illuminations ; young girls came forward and presented baskets of flowers to the Queen, and for the first time since they left the Tuileries the whole family slept in beds. The loyal Châlonais even proposed plans of escape, but, as had happened before at Varennes, and was destined to happen again at Dormans, the King declined. The royal family would have liked to stop here and rest a little, but the mob that had accompanied the carriage became alarmed at the sympathetic attitude of Châlons, and sent to Reims for a body of roughs, who, having marched all night, arrived about ten next morning, rendered quite irresponsible by fatigue, heat, and wine. They burst in upon the King, who was at Mass (for it was the day of the *Fête-Dieu*), and demanded with the greatest coarseness of expression that he and his family should leave immediately for Paris.

At Épernay, where the cavalcade stopped for dinner, the mob was particularly cruel. Some one in the crowd said, loud enough for Madame de Tourzel to hear it, "Hide me, so I can fire at the Queen without any one knowing whence the shot comes." But evidently the man's courage failed him, for no shot followed. As they got

out of the carriage one of the bodyguards picked up the Dauphin to carry him, and the poor little Prince, losing sight for a moment of his parents, commenced to cry bitterly. The physical privations of the journey had been a great strain on the child, and young as he was he could not but understand that some terrible misfortune had happened. When the time came for the royal family to leave Épernay, the mob had worked itself up into a rage, and the passage to the berlin was made with considerable danger. The people wished to detain the governess, and she was saved with much difficulty from the furious crowd.

It is Madame de Tourzel who tells of an incident that occurred during this part of the journey. Some of the mob surrounding the carriage complained of hunger, and the Queen offered them some meat. "Beware of it!" cried some one. "It is probably poisoned." At this Marie-Antoinette, indignant, offered some of the meat to the Dauphin and Madame Royale and ate some herself.

At a point beyond Épernay, the crowd attempted to kill a *curé*, who had aroused their suspicions by drawing near the carriage to speak to the King. His life was saved, however, by Barnave, one of the members of the Assembly who had been sent from Paris to meet the royal



party and had just joined them. Barnave hung out of the window in his anxiety to pacify the murderous mob, while Madame Elisabeth, alarmed for his safety, clutched him by the skirts of his coat. The Queen confided afterwards to Madame Campan that, with her usual capacity for seeing the humorous side of even the most serious things, she could hardly forbear to laugh at the ludicrous sight of the pious Elisabeth holding Barnave by his coat-tails.

The behaviour of Barnave and of Pétion, the two Assembly members who rode in the carriage, furnishes an interesting contrast. Barnave treated the unfortunate royalty with respect and consideration; on the other hand, Pétion was incredibly rude and ill-mannered, and even had the fatuity to imagine Madame Elisabeth had fallen in love with him. His absurd account of this episode in his memoirs is one of the few bright spots in the melancholy chronicles of this unhappy expedition.

The Dauphin was evidently much pleased with both of these men. He climbed off his mother's knee to go to them, and asked them quantities of childish questions. He was particularly interested in the buttons on Barnave's coat, on which there was something written, and was delighted when he had spelled out the legend, "Live free, or die." This sentence he

repeated over and over as he discovered it on one button after another.

The night was passed at Dormans, where the noise in the city was so great it was almost impossible to close eyes. Cries of "*Vive la Nation! Vive l'Assemblée nationale!*" commenced with the dawn, and made such an impression on the sleeping Dauphin that he dreamed he was in a wood with wolves, and that the Queen was in danger. He woke in tears, and could not be comforted until they carried him to his mother. Seeing she was indeed safe, he let himself be put to bed again, and slept quietly till it was time to go.

Finally, at six o'clock on Saturday morning, the 25th June, the royal family started on the last stage of their journey to Paris. At Claye the enraged mob wished to make itself the exclusive guard of the King, and there was considerable excitement. It even seemed at one time as if there might be a sort of miniature battle around the carriage. The heat was so great that some of the crowd near the berlin felt ill, and had to be revived with salts, while the dust was as thick as a cloud.

In the afternoon they reached the outskirts of Paris, where a huge concourse was waiting. Every one, by special order, kept his head covered, and it had also been ordered that profound silence

should be maintained. These orders were strictly observed, and some ragamuffins without hats even went so far as to cover their heads with handkerchiefs. In the streets there were placarded notices, saying :—

“Whoever applauds the King will be beaten.  
Whoever insults him will be hanged.”

At last, late in the afternoon, the cavalcade reached the Tuileries, and with feelings that must have been of mingled relief and despair, the royal family entered the château, which they were not destined to leave until they went from it to go to prison. As they got out of the carriage one of the national guards, to the Dauphin's distress and alarm, snatched him out of the arms of M. Hue, that most faithful of royal friends, who had come forward to receive his little master.

A moment later he and his family were again established in the Tuileries, and this most melancholy and ill-fated episode was at an end. It would be impossible to contradict the statement of Croker that “such a series of fatal accidents all tending to one point cannot be paralleled in the history of unfortunate princes.”

It is said that the flight to Varennes caused Marie-Antoinette's hair to turn white as that of a woman of seventy. Certain it is that it brought

about something of far greater and sadder importance. It was the determining point in the downfall of royalty. The Dauphin left the Tuileries on the night of the 20th the heir-apparent of the French throne; he returned on the 25th the prospective prisoner of the Temple.

## CHAPTER VI

### A LAST YEAR OF FREEDOM

TO the eyes of Prince Louis-Charles, the year which immediately followed the flight to Varennes seemed much like that which preceded it. His world was bounded by a château that was guarded like a prison, by a royal state diminished to the shadow of its former self, by a Queen-mother who wept often—we all know the story of the woman who, receiving alms from the Dauphin, said, "Now I shall be happy as a queen," and how the child answered, "Happy as a queen? I know a queen who weeps every day"—all these things, then, existed in 1792 much as they had in 1791. Perhaps the guards had grown a little more vigorous, Marie-Antoinette's tears may have fallen even faster, but to the childish mind life looked much the same as it had ever since the first move to the Tuileries. The twelve months from the Varennes fiasco to the July following were the Dauphin's last good days. With them ended his freedom and his childhood, after them followed the sad romance

of the Temple, that tragedy which gave him, when barely ten years old, such a life to look back on as has been lived by no other character in history. It was to these happy days that the unfortunate little Prince's memory used to turn in the midst of his subsequent miseries, and to these days attaches all the pathos that is always connected with the doing of things for the last time.

In June 1791, immediately on the forced return from Varennes, the King was temporarily suspended from power while an inquiry was held in the Assembly as to whether he should be put on trial for his flight, and whether this flight could be considered in the light of a crime. It was finally decided that no trial should be held. During this period of royal suspension, the position of the Dauphin and his family was most uncomfortable and alarming ; uncomfortable because they were kept in a condition which was captivity in all but name, alarming because of the uncertainty of their fate and the dangerously excited state of the people. All sorts of means were employed by interested parties to arouse the common folk against the Bourbons ; money was distributed, impassioned harangues were delivered in the streets, and indecent caricatures and songs were set under the eyes and ears of all who walked about the city.



A CONTEMPORARY CARICATURE.





Confined in the midst of such a people, the state of the royal family was by no means an enviable one. They were unable to go outside for air and exercise, because they did not wish to submit to the humiliation of appearing in public as prisoners, nor to expose themselves to the insults of the wrought-up populace. Shut up in the stifling midsummer heat of the château, a prey to every anxiety and depression, the King and Queen and Madame Elisabeth were acutely miserable in mind and body, and found practically their only distraction in watching the games of the Dauphin and his sister, who played together in cheerful ignorance of the unhappiness they were too young to notice.

In the meantime, discussions were going on in the Assembly concerning the treatment which the nation ought to accord to its runaway King. Some persons, with a feeling in which it is not altogether impossible to sympathise, thought that, by leaving the capital surreptitiously as he had done, Louis had forfeited his right to be ruler of France. These persons regarded a king as they might any other paid public official. He had run away from his duties without giving notice, and therefore was it not expecting a good deal for him to hope to find his berth waiting for him when he was brought back again? After much talk it was at last determined, however, that Louis's

suspension should last only till the new constitution should be prepared, and that it should cease as soon as he should give this constitution his acceptance. Should he at any time retract this acceptance, he would be considered to have abdicated, and would become in the eyes of France no more than a mere private citizen.

During this time Madame de Tourzel had been kept under confinement in the Tuileries because of her share in the royal family's escape. She was now interrogated formally and with much consideration, and shortly after this the discomfort of her position was modified; guards no longer spent the night in her room, and she was permitted to be with the royal family again. Up till then, the Dauphin had not even been allowed to look at his governess if he met her in one of the rooms of the palace. This curious behaviour evidently mystified the child, and perhaps led him to think the good lady had done something of which he ought to disapprove. When at last he was allowed to be with her again, this bewilderment of his kept him from treating her as cordially as he might have done. Madame de Tourzel asked him reproachfully if this was how he should treat some one who had suffered only because she had showed her devotion and faithfulness to the King. "What," she asked, "will your dear

Pauline, whom you talk of so often, think of your conduct?"

The little boy blushed, and threw himself shamefacedly into his governess's arms. "Forgive me!" he cried. "I have been very naughty. Please do not tell Pauline, for it would make her stop loving me." Madame de Tourzel promised as he wished, and after that Louis-Charles overwhelmed her with little caresses and attentions "to make her forget his naughtiness."

This Pauline, whose threatened disapproval was so alarming to the Dauphin, was Madame de Tourzel's daughter, a young girl of seventeen, for whom he had a tremendous affection. Her youth, in the midst of the many saddened older people who surrounded him, inspired him with confidence, and his fondness for her grew to be one of those quaint little romantic attachments which small boys so often feel for young girls. It is said that his miniature jealous rage if he suspected she preferred some other person to himself was highly amusing to his family. Once he went to her mother with a very serious face, and said he had a great favour to ask, and that she must promise to grant it. "I am six now," said he earnestly, "and when I am seven I shall go into the charge of a tutor. Promise me you will not marry Pauline to any one until then. It would be so dreadful

if she should leave me. No, no, you will not refuse to keep my dear Pauline for me." The promise was given, and the six-year-old Prince nipped in the bud any matrimonial plans which Pauline or her mother may have been cherishing for the moment.

Meantime, during these weeks of royal humiliation, the new constitution was being prepared, and finally, early in September, it was ready and was submitted to Louis, who, after long consideration of it, went to the Assembly to give it his formal acceptance. The Dauphin, who by one of its articles was for the second time deprived of his graceful title, to be called thereafter merely the Prince-Royal, went with his mother and Madame Royale to watch the ceremony from a box. It was a very curious affair, and typical of the spirit of the times. At first the King stood, his head uncovered, to deliver his oath; suddenly he noticed, to his astonishment and indignation, that he alone of all the Assembly was standing. Immediately Louis seated himself and finished his oath in his chair. The President of the Assembly listened in the least respectful manner he could think of, being seated in his arm-chair with his legs crossed, and when he came to make his reply to Louis, his tone was insolent.

Afterwards, there was held public rejoicings

in honour of the constitution; there were illuminations and fireworks, and at eleven in the evening the King and Queen and their children drove about Paris in a carriage. Despite its magnificence and gaiety, however, there was no real joyousness about this *fête*; the populace was not in a state of mind to enjoy harmless fireworks, and the Court was too depressed to take much pleasure in what must have seemed rather like a prisoners' outing. Even Louis-Charles, despite the novelty of a midnight drive amid the lights and the crowd, seemed infected by the universal presentiment of evil and took no real pleasure in the *fête*.

These joyless rejoicings over, the old routine settled down again upon the Dauphin's life—for though the new constitution had tried to cheat the boy of the title borne by the eldest princes of the royal family for more than four centuries, it was still as the Dauphin that France spoke and thought of him. The cloud under which royalty had rested for the past weeks had passed over him practically unnoticed. For example, missing one of the two ladies who had taken part, in a separate carriage, in the flight, and had been temporarily kept in confinement as had been Madame de Tourzel, he asked what had happened to his *bonne*. He was told she had gone to the country to visit her mother,

an explanation which he accepted quite unsuspectingly. Being set at liberty, the lady returned to his service. "It is a long time since I have seen you," said he, "but I do not blame you. In your place I should have stayed even longer"—and, to emphasise his meaning, he ran and kissed his own mother, who was standing near.

On the occasion of his first visit to the Tuileries garden after a confinement indoors, which had been particularly trying to the active little boy, he was so interested in watching a flock of birds in a tree that, walking along by Marie-Antoinette's side, his neck craned backwards, he tumbled into a little hole in the grass. This amused him very much and reminded him of the experience of the astrologer in La Fontaine's fable, the first lines of which he repeated to his mother forthwith :—

"A deep astrologer, so thoughtful, fell

Down to the bottom of a well—

'Blockhead who could not keep his feet,' they said,

'Did he pretend to read it overhead?'

The constitution had spoken of a law which was to be made regulating the education of the prospective heir to the throne. Nothing was done about this, however, and when the royal confinement was at an end, Abbé d'Avaux

took up his duties again. Full of activity and energy, the child was quite as eager at his lessons as at his games. He learned Italian at his own wish, because the Queen sometimes talked in it, and, romantically attached as he was to his fascinating Queen-mother, he had a childish jealousy of any of her accomplishments in which he could not share. It is evident, from a sample of his handwriting which has been preserved, that the boy was well advanced in his studies. He also commenced during this year to learn Latin. Notwithstanding all this education, however, he appears to have preserved his old fault of character, and one of the phrases in his childish copy-books was, "I know a prince who gets angry very easily." When these rages had spent themselves the Dauphin would be very much ashamed of himself, and, oppressed to an amusing extent by the royal dignity he had forgotten, would say tearfully, "What will the world think of me?" and would beg those who had witnessed his weakness not to speak of it to any one.

Louis-Charles was now nearly seven years old, at which age it was customary for Bourbon princes to leave the charge of women and go into that of men. It was to this custom that the Dauphin referred when he asked that his sweetheart Pauline might remain unmarried till

his birthday. It therefore became necessary to choose a tutor. Heretofore this choice had, of course, rested with the King, but the Government now wished to take it from him, and to name the tutor themselves. That this wish to oust the King from the direction of his son's education was not likely to appeal to Louis it is easy to understand, but, on the other hand, it is not impossible to sympathise with the opposing point of view, and with the popular desire to have a controlling share in moulding the sentiments of a child whose future would—as things then stood—mean so much to France. Some eighty ambitious candidates for the post were proposed to the Assembly, a collection of the most unsuitable people imaginable, and the ridicule with which this list was greeted seems more or less to have killed the Assembly's wish to choose the tutor. It has been said that Robespierre desired the place, and that his subsequent sanctioning of the choice of Simon as the child's "instructor" was a sort of vengeance because his pretensions were ignored. This, however, is more likely fable than fact.

Meantime the King had made his own choice, and the inappropriateness of it must have proved to the Assembly how right they had been in wishing to have a directing hand in the matter. The new tutor was M. de Fleurieu, whom even



the most ardent royalists acknowledge to have been a person of weak character, though of much devotion and education. Moreover, he had very unsuitable family connections, having contracted a low marriage, which he kept secret till the choice was made. His wife was an illegitimate daughter of Madame de Pompadour's husband by a woman of evil reputation, and was by birth and upbringing an improper person to be associated with the man into whose care was to be given the heir of France. No wonder there was grumbling, just as there had been at the time when the Children of France were given to the charge of "la Polignac." In this case the disapproved tutor never entered upon his duties; the matter remained in suspense, and the Dauphin's education went on as it had before.

Meanwhile, the kingdom was become more and more upset, and the royal family was in frequent danger. All the danger did not come from without the palace. In the winter, after the Varennes journey, there was appointed as pastry-cook at the Tuileries a man whom Madame Campan calls "a furious Jacobin," and the fear was well founded that he might make use of his opportunities to poison the royal family. All sorts of elaborate precautions were taken to avoid eating what he had made. It was arranged

that they should deprive themselves entirely of pastry, except when Madame Campan smuggled it in for them. To prevent any one knowing of these royal fears, the suspected food was broken on the plates, so that it might seem as if it had been eaten.

These dangers and troubles depressed Louis very much. It is said that at one time he passed ten consecutive days without uttering a single word, even in the bosom of his family, except at the time of his daily backgammon game with his sister. At such a time, the Dauphin's presence in the family did much to keep them from absolute despondency. From what we hear of Madame Royale, she was not exactly a lively child. Indeed, one of her contemporaries wrote of her that she was even in her earliest childhood of so sad a countenance that people of her acquaintance called her "*Mousseline la Serieuse*." It is not likely, therefore, that she did much to increase the gaiety of her unhappy parents. The Dauphin's services in this direction cannot, however, be exaggerated; in two ways he helped the poor King and Queen: in the first place, because for his sake they were forced to pretend to a certain cheerfulness, and also because his childish fooling made them smile even in their saddest moments.

Of the many public events of this busy year some few only touched the life of the Dauphin. Undoubtedly he shared in the consternation which the assassination of the King of Sweden caused to a king who was himself in constant danger of a similar fate. Another incident which came before the notice of the child was connected with the forty deserting Swiss soldiers and the celebration in honour of their liberation. Taking up a collection in Paris to pay the expenses of this *fête*, they had the audacity to make application at the Tuileries for subscriptions, and the gentleman whose business it was to attend to such requests lacked the courage in such dangerous times to decline to give. Hearing of this, Louis was much annoyed, and reproached the gentleman warmly for his baseness, but finally forgave him for what was a mistake, not a crime. The Dauphin, who had overheard the conversation, was furious at this cowardly behaviour on the part of the *valet de chambre*.

“What will the public say when they hear we have given money to these wicked folk?” he asked Madame de Tourzel indignantly. “If I had been in papa’s place, I should have sent the gentleman away and would never have looked at him again.” It was at such moments as this that Louis-Charles, child

though he was, showed himself to be twice as much of a man as his father. Had he, grown to man's estate, been the King, and good, unenergetic Louis the Dauphin, the whole history of Europe would have been changed; for it cannot be denied that, in producing the great Revolution, the character of Louis had quite as important an influence as the condition of the French people. Revolt hung wavering at the top of a hill—poor Louis, instead of holding it back, gave it the foolish, unintentional push that sent it rushing down to overwhelm France. What might have happened if, instead of Louis, a mature Louis-Charles had dealt with the revolt no one can more than guess. To hazard this guess—futile though it is—opens an interesting vista of what-might-have-beens.

In the first place, it is interesting to wonder what sort of man Louis-Charles would have grown to. Here we have a child, the details of whose life are recounted for us by a score of eye-witnesses of various prejudices, a child at whose most extraordinary and self-revealing career we can look back after a century with the detachment that time's perspective gives us. Considering, then, the childish character Louis-Charles showed during the ten years of his life, it is not altogether absurd to form some vague conclusions how that character would

have developed had he been spared from the tragedy of the Temple, and to picture for ourselves the man that might have been.

There is little doubt he would have been strong and good-looking, a handsome Bourbon with a will of his own—a kingly Bourbon, too, no *bourgeois* royalty like his father. He would have been strong in mind as well as body, set in his determinations, rather obstinate perhaps, and, though kind to those he cared for, not a superlatively soft-hearted monarch like Louis, nor a king much given to sentimental or imaginative thought about the people. We fancy he would have regarded the people from the true old-fashioned royal point of view, as part of the machinery, one of the legs of his throne, an order to whom individually he would show the greatest generosity and consideration, but for whom collectively he had little thought or interest.

A revolution, had it come in his reign rather than his father's, would have met with slight encouragement; he would promptly have put it down, or else would have perished in the attempt. We cannot imagine him shilly-shallying, making concessions, refusing to spill blood, or to take risks, accepting revolutionary constitutions because he dared not decline, and drawing back from them because he could not

carry them out. We can picture him slaying the revolution in open fight, or himself dying in the struggle ; we cannot see him submitting to imprisonment and trial and death from his own subjects. Personally, he would have been a man socially competent, which Louis never was—a man ardent in his emotions, quick and passionate in love and anger, proud, intolerant of disrespect, convinced of his divine right—in short, the typical romantic figure of royalty, a real Bourbon king.

It is, then, in view of all this half-guessed, half-deduced unfolding of his character that the intrigues of the spring of 1792 are particularly noteworthy and interesting, unproductive though they were of any tangible results. These intrigues had for their end no less a project than that of setting the Dauphin on the throne of France in place of his father—a project foreshadowed as long before as the autumn of 1791, when, as the Dauphin took his walks in the Tuileries gardens, people cried, “Long live our little King!”—to the delight of the child, who did not understand, and the dismay of his suite, who understood only too well. Let us quote a letter written by Louis on May 29, 1792, to his brother, the Comte de Provence, then a refugee abroad :—

“The audacity of the factionists, my dear brother, is absolutely unbridled,” writes Louis—but we must bear in mind that his point of view, necessarily prejudiced, must not be accepted without question. “The most absurd propositions have been made to me to abdicate the crown. If I give in to this pretended measure of *public safety*, they will proclaim my son King of the French, a Council of regency will preside over everything until his majority, and will sign in his name. If I acquiesce, they will leave me freedom to live wherever I like, even outside the realm. They will leave me the possession of all my inherited property, with a stipend of five millions, of which two will go to the Queen when I die. These propositions have been made to me by a man whom I could name to you, and who is the soul of this society which by now has undermined the edifice built by the centuries. Anonymous letters come to me from all directions. They tell me that we are coming to a time of tragedy whose *dénouement* will be the downfall of the monarchy and my death, if I do not decide to enter private life. I will not listen to these criminal insinuations, and I will die where Providence has placed me, imperturbable because I have never been anything but just. I am entirely resigned to anything. God and hope—these, my brother, are

things which none can take from me. I have, to oppose to the hatred of the wicked, my conscience and the courage that goes with misfortune.

“Farewell. I will write you at more length to-morrow. LOUIS”

This letter is worthy of the Louis who had always something noble beneath his stupidity, and was invariably brave and unmoved by danger and disaster. His standpoint toward the proposal he describes is only natural, perhaps it is even wise; for it is possible that by the spring of 1792 affairs were too bad in France to be improved, even by such a *coup d'état* as was proposed. On the other hand, however, it was a plan not utterly without merit, a plan whose adoption might have helped in a time so terrible that nothing could have harmed. France even then was royalist at heart; the Dauphin's popularity had always been tremendous; by that time Louis had entirely lost public confidence. There was a chance that, with a child on the throne, a little republican king, under the regentship of popular men of the time, reigning—a charming figure-head, according to the worshipped republican constitution—hope might have dawned for France. It was a slender chance, to be sure, but still it was a chance.



As proof of how seriously the project was taken,<sup>1</sup> there remains still a little copper witness, a *son* struck off as a trial piece, dated 1792 and bearing the effigy of Louis-Charles. Stamped round his head are the words, "Louis XVII., Roi des Français," and on the reverse side is written, "République Française." And this little *son* is all that remains to remind us of the project that might have saved the Bourbons from death and France from a reign of terror.

<sup>1</sup> Baron Georges de Biet, in the *Bulletin of the Société d'études sur la question Louis XVII.*

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FIFTY DAYS

CONDITIONS in France were going from bad to worse. Finally, at the end of May 1792, the King felt it necessary to veto two popular measures, one of them relating to the treatment of those of the clergy who refused the civil oath. This vetoing, though quite in accordance with his constitutional rights, created immense dissatisfaction, and was seized upon as a pretext for intensifying the King's unpopularity and for fomenting the people to an act of violence. On the very gates of the palace some daring person had the audacity to write: "No King, no civil list! A king is an obstacle to the happiness of the people."

Revolt was brewing everywhere; the Jacobins stirred the seething pot of discontent and heaped up the fires, and the dish of their cooking was the famous day of the 20th June. This day was the anniversary of the oath of the tennis-court at Versailles, and also, as it happened, within a day of the anniversary of the flight

to Varennes. On the former account it was deemed a favourable moment for a demonstration and uprising.

At five o'clock, therefore, on the morning of June 20, gatherings had already formed in several of the *faubourgs* of Paris. These crowds of rudely armed men and women grew rapidly larger and larger, and finally amalgamated and marched to the Assembly. Through the Assembly's hall they defiled in a motley crew that was more grimly humorous than actually threatening.

One section bore for their standard an old pair of breeches on a pike, with the motto, "*Vivent les sans-culottes!*" Another company carried along a pitchfork with a calf's heart stuck on it and an inscription reading, "The heart of an aristocrat." Whatever their intentions, they could hardly be said to be a prepossessing crowd in appearance, made up as they were in great part of the scum of Paris—wretched creatures with their faces blacked with coal, in a childish desire to make themselves more hideous; some of them half-drunk, others half-naked, and all of them armed with extraordinary and ridiculous weapons.

Leaving the Assembly, this burlesque of an army straggled across the château garden harmlessly enough, for so far they had done no

damage, with the exception of bursting in an iron railing. Now, however, they set about entering the château, and there followed that portion of the demonstration about which historians have quarrelled so often.

Revolutionary sympathisers have wished us to think that the 20th June was a sort of popular *fête*, innocent as a schoolboy's outing; royalists, on the other hand, have represented it as a day of unmitigated horror and violence. The fact that the crowd which forced its way into the King's presence was armed with pikes, pitchforks, boat-hooks, crowbars, and knives fastened to sticks, disproves the theory that Paris had gone out that June morning with the mere intention of celebrating a national anniversary by a joyous demonstration. On the other hand, the fact that Louis stood unguarded and face to face with the mob for hours, and escaped quite unharmed, gives the lie to the statement that the crowd was really bloodthirsty. Probably the truth of the matter is as M. Taine represents it when he says that by four o'clock in the afternoon the crowd had stood on their feet from ten to twelve hours, and were terribly bored, tired, and fractious.

Their leaders urged them to go into the Tuileries, and with a rush they obeyed, dashing up the great stairway with such impetuosity

that the cannon, picked up off its carriage and carried along in their arms, reached the third room on the first storey before it stopped. Doors were smashed in with hatchets, and in the great hall of the *Œil de Bœuf* the mob found themselves face to face with their King. Hue and another faithful servant attempted to get Louis out of the way and to bolt him into his bedroom, but the King, no coward for all his weakness, would not submit.

“Open!” he cried. “What have I to fear from Frenchmen?”

These words, absurd as they were from a man who had been for months in constant danger of losing his life from Frenchmen, produced, nevertheless, an excellent effect. The crowd was astonished, and as Weber, the Queen’s foster-brother, says in his flowery and high-flown memoirs, “The sudden apparition of a divinity surrounded by lightning and thunderbolts could not have made a greater impression on this crowd of brigands than did the appearance of the King, alone, without guards or suite.” There is no doubt that Louis never showed himself so courageous a man, so kingly a king, as he did that day when he faced, unmoved, the screaming, hooting mob, and stood calm and good-tempered in their midst through the sweltering hours.

In moments of actual danger Louis never lacked courage; on this day, moreover, that terrible inertia, everywhere else so disastrous to him and his cause, served him well. A king who had stormed and raged and attempted to retaliate against the insults of the vulgar and childish mob would very likely have been their victim. This man who, on the contrary, faced them calmly, and received their taunts with gentleness, almost with indifference, inspired them with awe.

Hue tells us that at their first glance at their serene King, the furious crowd was almost ready to lay down their arms and fall at his feet. To this impassive demeanour Louis added, with an astuteness not usual to him, an occasionally melodramatic remark, sure to catch the ears and the hearts of the hysterical mob. In short, he stooped, as must all men who hope to succeed in public positions, to play to the gallery.

"Sire, do not be afraid," said a faithful grenadier.

Taking the man's hand, Louis raised it to his heart. "Grenadier," said he, "rest your hand there, and see if my heart beats like one that is afraid." Such a phrase as this must have seemed to the ignorant crowd supremely inspiring.

The behaviour of Madame Elisabeth, the King's saintly sister, was equally admirable.

When he had presented himself to the mob, she clung to him by the coat, resolved to follow him, whatever might be his danger. The crowd pushed them apart, however, and alone in the midst of the furious people, Madame Elisabeth was mistaken for her sister-in-law, the Queen, and came near to losing her life at the hands of some men with pikes. "The Austrian!" they cried, and a pike was thrust against her throat. "You do not want to hurt me," said the young Princess to him gently. "Put away your weapon." Some one told her would-be murderer that she was not Marie-Antoinette. "Why did you undeceive them?" she asked reproachfully. "If they could have taken me for the Queen, it would perhaps have given her time to escape."

The Queen herself was, meanwhile, in a near-by room, her eyes full of tears that she was not able to be with Louis in his danger. "It is my duty," she cried, "to die by the King's side," and it was only with the greatest difficulty that those who were with her persuaded her that the difficulty of Louis's position would be infinitely increased if she should join him and he should be unnerved by the sight of her danger. Finally, yielding to this consideration and to the fact that, being a mother as well as a wife, she owed herself no more

to the King than to the Dauphin and his sister, who were clinging to her in pitiable terror, she gave in, and consented to remain where she was. At that moment the tumult without redoubled and, rushing to the door, the poor Queen cried out to Hue, "Save my son!"

"At these words," says the loyal servant, "I took the august child and carried him to the room of Madame Royale, which was far enough away for him not to hear the noise. The young Prince asked in sobs what the King and Queen were doing, and it was hard to seem reassured about their position. . . . Happily, word came soon that the Queen had retired to her son's room, and I took the Dauphin there. Hardly had he passed from Madame de Tourzel's arms into those of the Queen, hardly had he received her passionate caresses—for, not finding him in his room, the Queen had for a moment feared he was lost—than blows commenced to fall with redoubled force against the door of the next room. At this noise I flung myself toward a passage which communicated with the King's bedroom. I opened it, and the Queen and her suite took refuge there."

Set skilfully into the woodwork, the door of this passage had nothing which betrayed its presence. A moment later, the hordes poured into the Dauphin's room, now empty, and



attacked the woodwork with their hatchets. In a few seconds all the panelling near the secret door was smashed to pieces, and the wall was laid bare. By some lucky miracle, however, the door itself rested undiscovered. But for this, no one knows what fate might not have met the Dauphin and his mother.

All this time, each section of the royal family had been ignorant of the other's fate, Louis and his sister prey to the cruellest anxiety about Marie-Antoinette and the children, Marie-Antoinette almost certain at times that her husband had been assassinated by the mob, whose cries and rushings to and fro resounded through the château in a most alarming fashion.

After a little, the Queen abandoned her refuge in the room behind the secret door to go into the Council Chamber. Arrived there, she suddenly missed the Dauphin. To her terror, one of the ladies cried out, "Monseigneur le Dauphin has been captured," and Marie-Antoinette fell back fainting. It was a false alarm, however, and before long the boy was brought back by another of the ladies and a man, who had protected him. At this the Queen revived and was full of gratitude. Placed behind the long table in the Council Chamber, the Dauphin and the rest of the royal party watched the mob, now somewhat subdued, as it filed by.

“Do not be afraid,” said their leader to Marie-Antoinette. “You have been misled, as well as the King. The people love you more than you suppose,” and with this the crowd marched past the table. Some of them insulted her; others, moved at the sight of her and her children, wept and uttered benedictions.

The strange army had still its standards—the bleeding calf’s heart, the banner on which was written, “Tremble, Tyrant, thine hour is come!” the effigy of the woman hanging from a lamp-post (the favourite execution-place in the early days of the Revolution), and all the rest of their ghastly emblems. With wonderful self-control the Queen supported serenely not only the sight of these fearsome things, but also the anxiety she still felt as to the fate of Louis and Elisabeth, and was able to sit calmly between the Dauphin and Madame Royale and review affably this astounding army.

One woman in the crowd even went so far as to fling down on the table a red cap of Liberty, which the crowd forthwith insisted that the Dauphin should wear. In obedience to the will of the mob, the cap, so loathsome to royalists, was put on the Dauphin’s blonde curls. It was an indignity to which his father had already submitted. The heat was so great, however, that the child could not bear the weight of

the cap more than a moment, and it was taken off.

Finally, the distressing scene ended: Madame Elisabeth ran in, crying out, "All goes well! The King is in safety; the National Guard surrounds him and answers for his life."

Soon after this the royal family was re-united, after a separation which had put them all into terrible anxiety, if not into great danger. Overcome with fatigue—for it was eight o'clock in the evening before the crowd finally left the château—Louis threw himself down in an arm-chair and took the Queen and his children into his arms.

Not long after this touching scene, the Dauphin found himself surrounded by a deputation of members of the Assembly, which had been sent to the Tuileries. These men, curious to know what sort of child he was, and what kind of education he had had, commenced to ask him questions. Poor little boy, to have passed through a trying ordeal like the day of the 20th June, only to submit, at eight o'clock at night, to an examination on geography! A true little Prince, he rose to the occasion, and acquitted himself very well, astonishing and pleasing the deputies by the correctness of his answers, particularly to questions about geography and the newly arranged territorial divisions of France.

The examination over, the Dauphin noticed a certain member of the National Guard who had just come into the room, and who, so he learned, had been most zealous in protecting the King.

"What is his name?" asked the child. "I want to know it and remember it." This traditionally royal desire to remember and repay faithful servants sits quaintly on the head of the little seven-year-old boy who had just emerged triumphant from a geography examination.

"I do not know, Monseigneur," said Hue. "But he will be flattered if you go to him and ask him yourself."

Accordingly the child put his question to the soldier. To his chagrin the man declined to answer, even when the Prince urged him a second time. Then Hue himself asked the man's name.

"I would rather not say," replied the man sadly, "for it is, unfortunately for me, the same as that of an execrable man."

This faithful soldier, as Hue was able to discover, had the name of Drouet, the same as that of the postmaster who was responsible for the arrest at Varennes.

And so finished, with the Dauphin's bedtime, the uprising which, though it accom-

plished no great harm save some such damage as the tearing away of the wall in the child's room, was, as Croker says, "a rehearsal for the terrible 10th August," when the same actors were to play again the same rôles on the same stage. On the 10th August, however, the play—instead of being a comedy, or even a farce—was destined to be a poignant tragedy.

There now commenced "The Fifty Days" which marked France's final transition from the monarchy of the Bourbons to the republic of terror. These fifty days, it has been said, have had already, and will probably continue to have, a greater influence on the destinies of mankind than any other fifty days in the history of the world.

The royal family was during this period in the greatest danger. Not a day passed that those in the Tuileries did not fear for the lives of their masters, never a moment went by during which royalty could feel secure. Louis was certain that assassination awaited him, and with his usual phlegm seems to have accepted the danger calmly.

So great were the fears felt for the safety of the royal family, that one of their friends conceived the idea of having made for their use three cuirasses formed of a dozen thick-

nesses of taffetas, so as to be impenetrable to bullets or knives. Madame de Tourzel undertook to offer these to the Queen. Marie-Antoinette tried hers on at once—the other two were, of course, intended for Louis and the Dauphin—and then coolly invited the governess to test the cuirass by striking her with a dagger. The mere suggestion that she should commit such an act upset the poor lady terribly, and she absolutely refused to obey her mistress. After Marie-Antoinette had taken off the cuirass, the governess put it on herself and attempted to give herself a stab. It was found that the garment was, as it had been represented to be, quite impenetrable. That such extremely mediæval protection should have been judged necessary is sufficient indication of the dangers in which royalty was placed.

To avoid any chance of having to endure a second 20th June, the Tuileries garden was kept closed to the public. This had become the only promenade of royalty, who could not go abroad for fear of insults. The people grew to look upon the palace with a sort of horror, as a place which they ought to hold in execration. Presently it became impossible for the royal family to go even into the garden, without being insulted by people outside the gates. This deprivation of air and all out-

door exercise was particularly trying to the Dauphin.

One evening the experiment was tried of making an expedition to the child's little garden. Some persons passing by, however, saw the Queen and the boy, and commenced to sing insultingly and to make a show of looking towards the Prince and his mother with scrupulously covered heads. The outing, therefore, was not a great success, and was not repeated, Louis-Charles continuing to pass his days shut away from the toy garden where he had spent so many happy hours.

As time went on conditions grew more and more humiliating and alarming, until, after the arrival in Paris at the end of July of the Marseillais, that army of "bandits from the Midi," the audacity of the populace became positively terrifying. The Queen was now insulted even through the windows of her apartments, which looked out on the courtyard.

It was suggested that, the Queen's rooms being very inadequately guarded, she should go to sleep in the Dauphin's apartments. The Dauphin, ignorant of the reason of this change, was delighted to see his mother sleeping in his room, and used to run to her bed every morning as soon as she waked up, to take

her in his arms and make pretty speeches to her in his gallant little-boy fashion. This childish practice is said to have given the unhappy Queen-mother the only happy moments in her sad days.

It was not alone the lives of Louis and his family that were in danger, however. The great monarchy of the Bourbons was threatened. In the Assembly it was settled that the King's deposition was to be debated on the 9th August. The result of the debate was, however, of comparatively small moment, for it had been arranged that if the Assembly should not before midnight decree the King's downfall, those without would beat their drums, ring the bells of Paris, and march under arms against the Assembly and the palace. That these plans were laid carefully and well in advance is proved by the fact that people in the King's household had, as much as a week beforehand, an accurate printed programme of what was to take place, and, as it turned out, of precisely what did take place on the fatal 10th August.

The night of the 9th was a terrible one to those in the Tuileries. Of them all the Dauphin alone slept; the rest stayed up, waiting in their apartments for what the dawn might bring. Midnight passed. The Assembly had not rendered the decree. Three-quarters of an hour



more went by; then, suddenly, the tocsin was heard ringing all over Paris, and from every quarter of the city came to the ears of the watchers the noise of cannon mixed with the beating of drums. For those inside the château there was nothing to do but to wait.

Between four and five o'clock, Madame Elisabeth and Marie-Antoinette were together. Some one opened the shutter of the King's closet. Day was beginning to dawn. Madame Elisabeth went to the window and looked at the sky, which was very red.

"Come, sister," cried Elisabeth to the Queen, who was seated at the back of the room, "and see the breaking of the dawn." Marie-Antoinette went, and looked. It was the last time the sun rose on her a queen.

At seven o'clock it was announced that the Marseillais and the rest of the revolutionary army was marching on the château. Even then, says Taine, the King might, if he had been willing to fight, have defended himself, saved himself, even been victorious. But Louis was not willing.

Less than an hour later Rœderer, Procureur Syndic of the Council General of the Department of Paris, asked to see the King. "The danger," said he, "is beyond description. Defence is impossible. Of the National Guard

there are but a small number on whom we can count. The rest will join the assailants at the first attack. Your only resource is to seek refuge with the Assembly." To Louis this course was highly repugnant, and Marie-Antoinette had said, a few moments before, that she "would rather be nailed to the walls of the château," than seek an asylum with the hateful Assembly. Now, however, there was no choice. Louis and his family went, and, going, they left the palace of kings for ever.

The headquarters of the Assembly were near by, and the royal family made their way thither on foot, passing between two lines of guards and surrounded by the furious crowd that kept crying, "Down with tyrants! Death! death!" So closely were they pressed upon by the mob that Marie-Antoinette was robbed of her watch and purse by one of the patriots.

At first the little Dauphin walked along undisturbed, amusing himself by kicking the heaps of leaves between the legs of those who walked before him. Poor child! he had witnessed so many of these terrible popular uprisings that in his small mind there may very likely have grown up the impression that revolutions were ordinary everyday occurrences in all royal families, and that it was only natural and fitting that palaces should be invaded periodically by frantic mobs.

Indeed, it would not have been strange if this had been his idea of royal life, for nearly all his seven years had been passed in the midst of terror and sudden alarms, of bloodshed and midnight tocsins. No wonder he had grown *blasé* in the face of revolutionary outbreaks.

His unconcerned progress amongst the leaves was interrupted by a tall grenadier, who, fearing the child might come to danger in the dense crowd, picked him up and carried him, holding the little boy high over the heads of the mob. For a moment Marie-Antoinette mistook the man's intention, and thinking he was about to hurt the child, she uttered a piercing scream and was on the point of fainting.

Presently they reached the Assembly. The Dauphin was given back to his mother. Louis mounted the platform by the President.

"I have come, gentlemen," said he, "to save France from a great crime. I know I could not find greater safety than amongst you." There then began the discussion which lasted thirteen hours, and finished by robbing Louis of his throne, the Dauphin of his heritage.

At the Tuileries, meantime, the mob was disporting itself as best it could without the principal victims. At first their invasion of the château had been a peaceable one, then suddenly a shot went off, probably by mistake. No one

can tell which side fired it, but the results were fatal. In an instant the mob had fallen on the royal household and massacre began. Nearly everybody was killed, down to the pot-boys in the kitchen, and in many cases cruelty even went so far as to inflict not only death but torture. At the same time, while the royal corridors ran with the blood of faithful Royalists, a sort of bedlam reigned; porters seated themselves on the throne in the coronation robes, a woman of the streets lay down in the Queen's bed, and a body of revolutionaries screamed out the Marseillaise hymn, while one of the National Guards accompanied them on the harpsichord. Never did a palace see a scene at once so horrible and so grotesque.

The noise of all this penetrated to the Assembly, and was heard by the royal family. All of them were full of distress and anxiety for their faithful friends they had left behind. The Dauphin flung himself into the arms of his governess, weeping violently, for the heroine of his baby romance, Pauline de Tourzel, was one of those left behind. His childish anguish was pitiful, and even awakened the sympathy of the none too soft-hearted deputies who stood by. After a time, to the Dauphin's joy, news came that Pauline had been saved.

The conclusion of this terrible day was a





decree which, suspending the King, kept him and his family hostage, and suppressed the civil list. The Bourbons were no more. It was M. Louis Capet, his wife and children, who left the Assembly at ten o'clock on the night of August 10.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE TEMPLE

**I**T was in the Convent of Les Feuillants that the Dauphin and the rest of the royal hostages spent the night following the fatal decree. The Tuileries, sacked, and full of the dead Royalists and drunken revolutionaries, they were destined never to enter again.

The lower part of the Convent of Les Feuillants was then used for the offices of the Assembly. In the upper storey was hurriedly prepared a little suite of cells for the accommodation of the royal family and a few devoted friends who wished to accompany them. The Dauphin shared his cell with Madame de Tourzel, Madame Elisabeth, and the ill-fated Princesse de Lamballe, the Queen and her daughter were in another, and Louis had a cell to himself. The royal party also included several other persons. As on the previous night, no one slept except the poor little Prince and Princess, who, after their long confinement in the heat and noise of the Assembly hall, were utterly



exhausted. The royal family being without any change of linen or clothing, it had been necessary to scurry over Paris to find something for them to put on.

A king forced to appeal to his subjects for old clothes is a figure tragic in its absurdity. It was with great difficulty that there were found any little shirts to fit the Dauphin ; finally, some were obtained from the Countess of Sutherland, the wife of the English Ambassador, who had a son about the Prince's age. No sooner was the child put into one of these borrowed garments than he fell sound asleep. Mingled distress and fear, however, kept all the grown people from so much as shutting eyes all night. Their position was indeed one of real danger. The excited and triumphant people outside their refuge kept up a constant howling of threats and insults, and it was feared they might at any moment break in and massacre the victims who had escaped them that morning at the Tuileries.

Next day, as the Queen lay in bed, Madame de Tourzel brought the Dauphin to her. Marie-Antoinette looked at him and his sister sadly. "Poor children!" said she. "How heartrending it is! Instead of handing them down a fine inheritance, we can only say it ends with us!"

For three days the royal family remained in

Les Feuillants. Every morning between ten and eleven a party of factionaries came to lead them to the hall of the Assembly, and shut them up there in a private box. There, cooped together in a space ten feet square and stiflingly hot, they listened to all sorts of insults and execrations directed against royalty and themselves.

The first day after their establishment in the convent, orders were given that the several friends who had come to bear their royal master company must leave them. This pained Louis deeply. "I am, then, a prisoner," said he. "Even Charles I. was happier than I, for he kept his friends near him to the end."

It was obvious that the royal family could not remain indefinitely in Les Feuillants, which had been suggested as merely a temporary refuge until order should be restored in Paris. At first it was proposed to lodge them in the Luxembourg, but since this place would be difficult to guard, it was finally decided, after considerable discussion, to place them in the Temple, which until the outbreak of the Revolution had been the Paris residence of Louis's brother, the Comte d'Artois. The Temple consisted of a palace and a deserted tower.

Marie-Antoinette's words when she heard this decision were almost uncannily prophetic.

“You will see,” whispered the Queen to Madame de Tourzel with a shiver, “that they will put us in the tower, and will make a veritable prison of it. I have always had a horror of that tower, and a thousand times I have begged M. le Comte d’Artois to have it torn down. It was surely because I had a presentiment of what we shall have to suffer there.”

It was on the afternoon of the 13th August—a fact which must afterwards have seemed significant to the superstitious amongst the King’s friends—that the royal party left Les Feuillants to go to the Temple, where so much misery awaited them. They were accompanied by a number of persons whom Louis had chosen for the service of himself and his family. Amongst these persons were Madame de Tourzel and Pauline, M. Hue and Madame de Lamballe.

The drive to the Temple was like so many others which the Dauphin and his parents had taken, a long sorrow and humiliation. Directions had been given that during this journey the royal family should be treated “with the respect due to misfortune.” This respect resolved itself into the shouting of coarse insults all along their route and the stopping of the carriage in the Place Vendôme to show the King how a statue of his great ancestor, Louis XIV., had been thrown down.

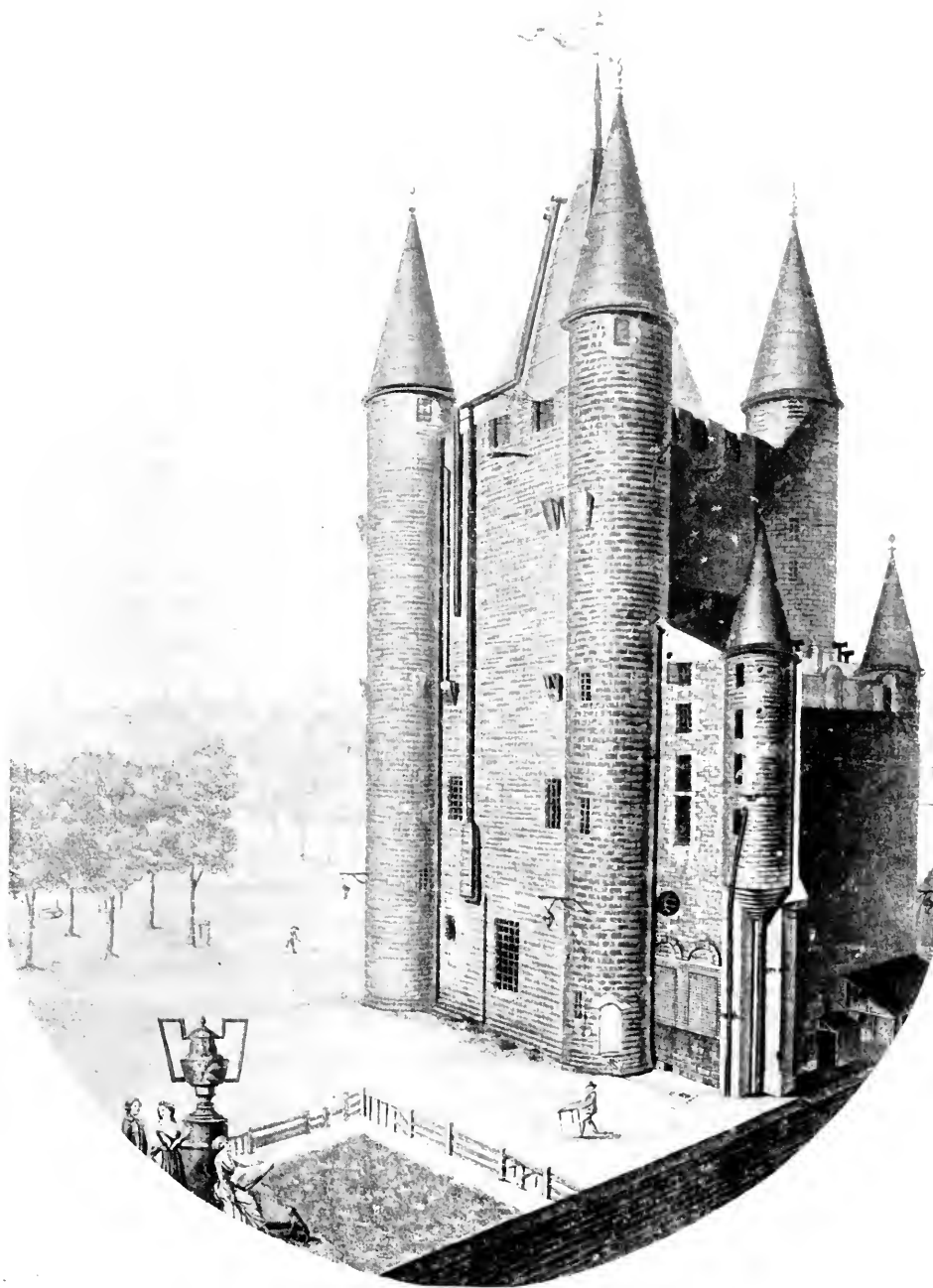
"Behold," said some one, "how the people treat their kings!"

"May it please God," replied Louis with dignity, "that their fury shall exhaust itself on inanimate objects!" And it rather seems as if, for once, the usually none too witty Louis had come out victorious in a verbal contest.

The journey to the Temple was made to last two hours and a half, and during all this time the royal family were the recipients of that "respect due to misfortune" which the people of Paris had interpreted in so peculiar a fashion.

It was after dark when the royal carriage drew up at the Temple. Those in charge of the arrangements, by a cruel thoughtlessness, or a yet more cruel irony, celebrated this moment of arrival as if it were a joyful occasion, and greeted the downfallen royalty with illuminations and a feast. It was ten o'clock before this grand supper was served, and the little Dauphin was by that time so tired that he fell asleep and almost dropped his head into his soup.

This feast was served in the *salon* of the palace. As will be remembered, the group of buildings called the Temple (which was in part built as early as 1265 or 1270 as the headquarters of the Knights Templars in Paris) included a palace and a tower. It had at first been intended



THE TEMPLE

*From an engraving in the Carnarlet Museum*



that the royal family should live in the former, but the Commune at last decided on the tower. The rooms there were not quite ready, however, when the King arrived, and so, for several hours, he and his family remained amongst the crowd of people in the palace.

While they were still at table—the Dauphin sound asleep on the knees of his governess—word suddenly came that the Dauphin's room was prepared. A man snatched up the child in his arms and started off with him across a number of rooms and down a long, dark passage, Madame de Tourzel, in terror, following him as fast as she could go, but unable to keep up and having no notion where this stranger intended taking her little master or what he intended to do with him. Finally, reaching the tower building, the man set the child down in one of the rooms and went off. Afraid of irritating him, the governess did not detain him to ask even a single question, but immediately put the Prince to bed in silence, and sat down on a chair beside him to watch over her little charge. She was much afraid that she and the Dauphin were to be separated for good from the King and Queen. However, to her joy, this fear proved ill-founded, and after a time Marie-Antoinette joined her.

“Did I not tell you it would be like this?”

said she, glancing about the tower room. Poor Queen! this chance to say "I told you so" was her only consolation!

The Temple exists no longer; it was demolished years ago by the first Napoleon, who was anxious to extinguish all reminders of ancient times, and the place where it stood is marked in modern Paris by the squalid and unattractive Square du Temple. It will therefore be necessary to describe briefly this tower in which the Dauphin was destined to spend the rest of his days.<sup>1</sup> It consisted of two parts, the great tower, with its high centre turret surrounded by four smaller turrets, and alongside of this great tower, and part of the same building, the little tower, in which—the great tower being at the moment in a state of dilapidation—the royal family was lodged for the first weeks of their stay at the Temple. It is therefore with the little tower that we are at present concerned.

This little tower was a most inadequate royal residence. On each storey were two rooms with a smaller room between them. On the lower floor slept the Dauphin and the Queen, on the upper one the King was lodged, together with a bodyguard. Madame Elisabeth was established in a kitchen, "of which the filth was horrible."

<sup>1</sup> An interesting and detailed account of the Temple is given by M. Lenôtre in "The Last Days of Marie-Antoinette," pp. 21-32.



It is said that even the man in charge was ashamed at showing her to such a bedchamber. The King's room does not appear to have been much more attractive. Hue says that "the bed was full of insects," and that, "engravings—for the most part very indecent"—covered the walls. The King took these pictures down himself, saying as he did so, "I do not wish to leave such objects under the eyes of my daughter."

Ugly and uncomfortable as it was, the Temple was not then particularly secure, either from attack from without or attempts to escape from within. Work was immediately commenced, however, with a view to remedying this defect. A number of the buildings which surrounded the tower were torn down, and around the vacant square left after this was accomplished there was erected a high wall. As may be imagined, the guarding of the royal family was most rigorous. Guards watched over them constantly, night and day, so that they were never alone together for a minute, and an immense deal of energy was expended on trying to prevent them from holding communication with persons outside the Temple. For this purpose the table-napkins were unfolded, the rolls broken and the crumb probed with a fork, and all sorts of other minute precautions taken to avoid the possibility of their receiving letters surreptitiously.

It seems, on the other hand, to have been practically the only diversion of the prisoners to attempt to get the better of their guards, and they and their friends exercised the most wonderful ingenuity in carrying on their correspondence. The long story of this contest betwixt guards and prisoners makes very entertaining reading. Sometimes, for example, one of the King's faithful servants was able, as he walked along the passage from the kitchen to the royal quarters, to replace the paper stopper of a decanter with another on which some news or warning had been written. At other times, notes were wrapped around little balls of lead and dropped into the food. We can fancy what joy the boyish soul of the Dauphin must have taken in all these elaborate mysteries, for he was certainly far too quick-witted not to have noticed them.

The life of the royal family, particularly after the forced departure of all, except Hue, of the suite they had brought with them, was painfully monotonous. They saw no one, did nothing, went nowhere, day in, day out. By a pathetic effort at self-deception, they drew up a schedule which they followed exactly, in the hope thereby of cheating the dull, unoccupied hours into passing less slowly. At six o'clock the King, and presumably the rest of his family, arose; at nine the family met in the King's room for

breakfast; at ten they all went down into Marie-Antoinette's bedchamber, which, being the biggest, they used as a living-room. The next hour was spent in the education of the Dauphin. Louis instructed the child in geography. Marie-Antoinette taught him history and to get verses by heart, while Madame Elisabeth gave him lessons in arithmetic. There is no doubt this was the most interesting hour of the day. At eleven the lessons stopped, and the women set themselves to various sorts of feminine handiwork—sewing, knitting, the making of tapestry. At noon, the three Princesses went to Madame Elisabeth's room to change their dresses, and at one the whole family went for their walk in the garden.

These walks were a daily humiliation, and would probably have been cut out of the programme entirely if the Dauphin's health had not demanded exercise in the air. The guards never forgot to show the royal prisoners all the insults they could think of. In justice to these men, however, we must not forget that they were intoxicated with vanity at being put in command over an ex-king and queen, and that, moreover, they were probably almost as bored as their royal charges. *Ennui*, however, can only partially excuse the meanness of these gaolers, who invented a hundred ways of making the daily

could have been. On September 2 much disturbance was noticed in the neighbourhood of the Temple. The royal family, notwithstanding this, went for their usual walk in the garden. Suddenly, while they were still walking about, guns commenced to go off, and drums to beat. The guards hurried the royal family back into the Temple and shut them up securely. No one knew what might happen; every one feared for the worst. As they came in, one of the officers said to Louis, "The drum has beaten to arms. We shall all perish, but you shall die first!"

At this threat the Dauphin burst out crying, and ran into another room in terrible distress. His sister followed him and had great difficulty in quieting him, for the poor child fancied his father was already being murdered. Immediately after the excitement commenced, Hue was arrested and removed for the second time. (He had been taken away from the Temple in August at the same time Madame de Lamballe and the governess and her daughter were removed, but had managed to get permission to return.) This time, however, the arrest was definite, and the faithful Hue said good-bye for the last time to his royal friends. That night the drums beat steadily, and the Queen could not sleep.

Next day the royal family was not allowed to

walk in the garden, and at dinner-time they heard again the drums and the cries of the people. After dinner Louis was just sitting down to a game of backgammon with the Queen—which Madame Royale tells us he played merely for the sake of having an opportunity to say a few words to her unheard by the guards—when a terrific shouting was heard. It was the mob approaching with the head of the Princesse de Lamballe on a pike, and moved by the loathsome wish to make Marie-Antoinette kiss the lips of her murdered friend. The royal family as yet knew nothing of the cause of the uproar, and the officer who chanced to be in the room behaved with much consideration, closing the windows and drawing the curtains so that the Queen might be spared the appalling sight of a mob using as a trophy the dismembered body of her friend. Louis asked what was the matter.

“Since you will know,” replied another officer brutally, “it is the head of Madame de Lamballe that they want to show you.”

At this, Marie-Antoinette fainted in the midst of her weeping children and family.

Meantime, the crowd outside the Temple had grown to enormous proportions, and kept demanding to see Marie-Antoinette. It is hardly to be supposed that if they had succeeded she would have escaped the fate of her friend. Those in

charge of the Temple showed themselves on this occasion to be men of great resource and tact. Instead of resisting the mob by force, they hastily tied a tricoloured sash across the main entrance. Confronted with these honoured colours the mob, crazy as it was, paused; none cared to tear down the sacred barrier. The crowd was stopped. At this favourable moment one of the officers delivered a speech to the mob, in which, with the utmost cleverness, he flattered them and appealed on the royal family's behalf to what vestiges of reason remained with them in their excitement. Finally, a small deputation of the crowd was admitted into the garden and allowed to parade about there proudly with their disgusting trophies. After some difficulty, and by a further administration of ridiculous compliments on their bravery and nobility of character, the deputation was induced to go away, and at the end of about an hour danger was over.

The mayor now sent his secretary to Louis. This man, according to the young Princess, behaved very absurdly, and said a thousand things which at any other time would have set the royal family laughing. He fancied that it was out of respect for him that the Queen was standing. The fact was that ever since her recovery from her fainting fit she had stood in Madame

Elisabeth's room motionless and perfectly insensible to everything that was going on about her. Instead of standing in honour of her ridiculous visitor, the probability was she did not even realise he was there. A curious incident of this terrible day was the demand made upon Louis that he should pay for the tricolour sash. This seems to show that his guards were not only resourceful but were also excellent men of business.

That night the drums again beat constantly, and poor Marie-Antoinette lay sobbing, hour after hour.

After the September massacres, the strictness with which the royal family was guarded increased every day. But in spite of the never relaxing vigilance of the guards, they received letters almost every day. Sometimes these letters were hidden in their food, at other times Turgot, the devoted Royalist servant connected with the Temple kitchen, was able to conceal notes in various places about their rooms—in out-of-the-way corners, in the hot air holes of the stove, or under the furniture. Besides delivering written communications, Turgot was able to keep the prisoners more or less in touch with events in the outside world by means of an elaborate code of signs which Madame Elisabeth invented. If, for example, the Powers were concerning them-

selves with the royal family, Turgot was to touch his hair with the fingers of his right hand, and should the servant place the second finger of his right hand on his right eye, royalty would understand that the Austrians had been successful on the Belgian frontier.

All this shows plainly that the King and his family were far from hopeless. It is difficult to comprehend how they could have continued to believe they would be saved by the foreign invasion of France about which they were so preoccupied, or to understand how sane people could imagine that bloodthirsty Paris would give them up alive to a victoriously invading army. It would have been supposed that, instead of hoping for foreign invasion, they would have lived in constant dread of such an event. This, however, is only one more of the strange features of the Bourbons' behaviour during the Revolution—almost inexplicable, unless we are prepared to accept it as a fact that Louis and his wife and sister had not amongst them the common-sense of one ordinary child of fourteen.

Another method by which this misguided family secured news seems to have been invented by Hue, and, after his departure, it was continued by Cléry. This was to listen, either from the top of the tower or from a convenient window, to what was shouted out by the news-



crier who passed by in the street every evening. This crier always shouted over several times a summary of what had taken place in the Assembly, in the Commune, and with the armies, and it was consequently quite easy for the listener to gain a slight though rather tantalising idea of the day's news. This news the listener found a chance to communicate to whichever of the Princesses was watching beside the Dauphin's bed when he brought the supper to her, and she in turn was able to tell it to her fellow-prisoners.

The royal family, however, was not alone deprived of distractions and newspapers, but suffered also from the lack of more material things. Their food was excellent, but their other wants were not so well provided for. Hue tells us melancholy stories of insufficient table and bed linen, of torn sheets on the Dauphin's bed, and of how the Queen and Madame Elisabeth were forced to mend Louis's clothes. The King owned only one suit, and in consequence Madame Elisabeth and the Queen had to take advantage of the time when he was in bed to do their mending. On one occasion Madame Elisabeth had to sit up part of the night sewing, to put her royal brother's scanty wardrobe in such condition that he would have clothing fit to wear next morning. Marie-

Antoinette, in the midst of these privations, which of course seemed far more painful to people used to living in royal state, must sometimes have thought bitterly of those days at Trianon when she had light-heartedly played at living simply, and had found her greatest pleasure in escaping from court etiquette.

On the 21st September the Convention voted the abolition of royalty and the establishment of a republic. It was at four o'clock in the afternoon that this news was announced to the ex-royalties at the Temple. A great body of officers and people came to stand before the tower; there was a flare of trumpets; then a profound silence while the decree was read. Inside the tower, Louis and his family listened and heard distinctly every word of the revolutionist, who had "the voice of a Stentor." Seated near them was a particularly hostile guard, who, as the reading of the proclamation commenced, fixed on Louis a triumphant, taunting grin. With royal pride the dethroned King refused to give the officer any satisfaction, and holding his book in his hand he continued to read, unmoved, until the reciting of the decree was finished. Marie-Antoinette, to whose vivacious nature such self-control was more difficult than to her unemotional husband, also preserved the same indifferent appearance.

That night Cléry wrote, as was his habit when there was occasion to request for anything which was necessary for his little master, and employed his usual formula: "The King asks on behalf of his son for . . ."

"The King?" questioned one of the Temple guards. "How dare you use a title which has been abolished by the will of the people?"

Thereafter the requests were worded as follows: "So-and-so is needed for the use of Louis-Charles." The Princesses, moreover, were compelled to remove with their own hands the crowns with which their linen was embroidered.

This formal abolition of royalty meant, however, merely a fresh humiliation rather than an actual blow to the Dauphin's parents, coming as it did after many weeks of what was abolition in all but name. A far more poignant sorrow hung over them in the proposed separation of Louis from the rest of the family, something which had been threatened for a long time. On the 26th September Cléry told Louis that this separation was soon to be made, and that he was to be taken to live in the adjacent great tower, while his wife and children remained in the little tower. Three days later, Cléry's prophecy was fulfilled. As a sort of preparation, evidently, for this move, the Commune had decided on certain new rules for the royal

prisoners, and on the morning of September 29 some officers came to announce this decision to the family.

Madame Royale's account of this episode unconsciously reveals in its two short sentences the whole unreasonable attitude of the royalists, with whom, although we cannot fail to give them unmeasured sympathy, we have often also to feel the deepest irritation. Here is what she says : " One day they removed pens, paper, ink, and pencils ; they searched everywhere even with rudeness. That did not, however, prevent my mother and me from concealing some pencils which we preserved." Was ever a point of view more absurdly illogical? The Bourbon prisoners felt they should have been trusted as other prisoners were not, because they were royal ; they resented the fact of a search such as that to which other prisoners would have been subjected, and yet they were ready, even eager and proud, to behave as ordinary prisoners might have done, and to deceive their guards by hiding prohibited pencils. We notice this quaint unreasonableness in a hundred episodes of their captivity. They boasted of how they had outwitted their gaolers, and in the same breath complained because their gaolers did not trust to their royal honour.

On the evening of the search, Louis was

removed to the great tower, to the intense distress of all the prisoners. At first it seemed as if he would not be allowed to see his family again, but poor Marie-Antoinette's grief at the separation was so terrible that even the gaolers were softened, and the royal family was permitted to meet each day at meal-times and when they took their walks in the garden. Finally, about a month after the King had been removed from the little tower, his family was allowed to follow him, and on the 26th October the prisoners were reunited in the great tower.

## CHAPTER IX

JANUARY 21, 1793

THE reunion of the royal family was marked by an occurrence which caused the greatest grief to the Dauphin and Marie-Antoinette. This was the transferring of the child, who till then had been under the immediate care of his mother, to the charge of Louis. To the Queen and the royalists this proceeding seemed an indication of pure spite, emanating from a wish to take from poor Marie-Antoinette what was her greatest pleasure and resource, the care of her little son. Very possibly this was the case. The following order, quoted by M. de Beauchesne, is the official explanation of the child's removal:—

“Commune of Paris . . . Year I. of the French Republic, the 27th October, 1792.

“Acting on observations made by one of the members serving at the Temple that the son of Louis Capet is day and night under the direction of women—mother and aunt—and considering that this child has reached the age

when he should be under the direction of men, the Council, deliberating on this subject, has ordered and does order that the son of Louis Capet shall immediately be removed from the hands of women, to be given to and to remain with his father day and night, except after dinner-time, when he shall go up to the apartments of his mother and aunt, while his father is sleeping, and shall come down again between five and six. All this is to be under the surveillance of one of the commissioners of service."

The blow fell, and the weeping little Prince was taken away from his mother at the very moment of the much anticipated reuniting of the royal family in the great tower of the Temple. This great four-turreted tower, it will be remembered, was the place originally intended for the lodging of the prisoners, and they had been placed temporarily in the little tower only because the big one was not ready for them. The great tower was a building some 150 feet high and divided into four storeys. Its walls were immensely thick—so thick, in fact, that the windows stood in little alcoves some eight or nine feet deep. Great iron screens had been put at these windows, which kept the air from coming in and the royal prisoners from seeing out. They had even to ask their guards if they wished to know what the weather was. Of the four storeys of the

tower, two, the second and third, were devoted to the use of the prisoners. Originally each of these storeys had formed one great room, but they were now divided each one into four rooms. On the second floor was Louis's lodging and that of the Dauphin and Cléry. Marie-Antoinette, her daughter, and Madame Elisabeth lodged on the third floor. With rare tactlessness, those who had charge of the decorating of these rooms had covered the walls of the King's antechamber with paper representing the stone interior of the prison, and had hung up in it a copy of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, written in big letters and framed in a tricoloured border.

The daily life of the Dauphin and his family continued much as it had been in the little tower, and, despite the alarming decree, the child saw his mother nearly as much as before, except that he was no longer with her at night. Though the régime was altered, however, the prisoners themselves, depressed by the absence of light and sunshine, had changed greatly. They were no longer serene and cheerful, and the guards noticed a marked difference in their demeanour. The King was restless, and walked to and fro, wandering from one room to the other; the Dauphin came and went in the same way, and seemed to have lost all his playfulness. The family were far less often together, and when together con-



versed much less frequently. In fact, everything—as one of their guards says in his narrative—seemed to foretell the still greater misfortunes that were soon to fall upon them.

The system of guarding was even stricter than before, but its severity was greatly increased or modified from day to day, according to the dispositions of the guards who happened to be on duty ; for it must not be supposed that all these men were brutal and tyrannical. In fact, so sympathetic were some of them that their kindness towards the royal prisoners afterwards cost them their lives. It is said that many of them, by showing their sympathy in indiscreet ways, not only compromised themselves but also did more harm than good to the prisoners. Others befriended royalty more sensibly, and did much to make the gloomy days in the great tower bearable. One of them used to bring Marie-Antoinette newspapers which, according to her orders, were of two sorts, one of sound principles, the other less moderate. These the Queen and Madame Elisabeth would take away and read on the top of the tower, where a sort of promenade had been screened off around the battlements so that the royal family could walk about there unobserved by the public and without seeing anything of the outside world except the sky.

On the other hand, many of the guards were

almost fanatical in their severity, and Cléry recounts all sorts of ridiculous precautions which they thought it necessary to take.

One of them, for example, insisted on breaking the macaroons, to see if there were letters concealed inside, while another carried caution so far as to cut open the peaches and crack the stones, though it would certainly seem a more than human feat to hide correspondence inside a peach stone. A third of these painstaking gaolers forced poor Cléry to drink one day the soapy water which had been prepared for the King's shaving—this on the pretext that it might contain poison. When the clean clothes came back from the washing, each piece was opened out carefully to its full extent, while the laundry-book and paper in which the clothes were wrapped up were both put by the fire, so as to discover whether there was not some secret writing on them.

Besides the fanatical guards there were others who were merely insolent, like the stone-cutter who stretched himself out one day in his dirtiest clothes on the Queen's damask sofa, and explained his behaviour by remarking that all men were free and equal, a remark that reminds us by its inappropriateness of the Dauphin's quotation of the proverb about glory when he flung himself into the thorny bushes.

However, judging from the various accounts of the Temple captivity, it would appear that no small number of those who came actually in contact with the prisoners were kindly disposed towards them, and that even more of them would have shown sympathy had they not been in terror of compromising themselves—a very grave risk in those times. One day a certain one of these gentler gaolers tried to strike a few notes on the harpsichord which stood in one of the tower rooms, and found the instrument in such bad condition that it was impossible to do anything with it. Seeing this, Marie-Antoinette said she would be glad to use the instrument to teach her daughter music, but that it had till then been impossible to get it tuned. That same day the instrument was put in order, and in the evening the guards and the Queen looked through the little pile of music that lay near the harpsichord. One piece was called “*La Reine de France*,” and, reading its title, the dethroned Queen exclaimed sadly, “*Times are changed!*” Another piece was the “*Marseillaise*,” which, it is said, Marie-Antoinette, by some strange freak of caprice, played on the newly tuned harpsichord for the entertainment of her gaolers.

In November the royal family, now prisoners of some three months’ standing, received their first official visit from the National Convention,

which sent a deputation to see if Louis had any complaints to make. Either by accident or design, one of the members of this deputation was Drouet, the postmaster at Varennes, but for whom the royal family might then have been free. It may be imagined how unpleasant it was to them to see this man, particularly since he behaved in a very objectionable fashion. The Queen refused even to speak to him when he questioned her, and shivered when he sat down beside her. All this evidently did little to ingratiate the already rabidly anti-Royalist Drouet, and a little while later he proposed in the Convention the cruel measure of entirely depriving Louis of all communication with his family.

A few days after Drouet's visit, the King fell ill with fever and a swelling in the face. Permission was at first refused for him to receive a visit from his dentist, but the illness growing more serious, his old doctor was allowed to come to the Temple to see him. The Commune, indeed, became quite disquieted about his condition, and insisted on frequent bulletins, though it is, at first consideration, difficult to see why they should have been so sympathetic in the ill-health of the prisoner who was so soon to be put to death. Louis's illness lasted six days, and hardly was he recovered than the Dauphin, whom the guards had not permitted to be removed from

the sick-room, fell ill also. Marie-Antoinette was greatly distressed, because she was unable to stay with the sick child at night, but notwithstanding repeated demands permission to do this was denied her. In turn the Queen, Madame Royale, Madame Elisabeth, and finally Cléry, were infected with the disease, which is said to have been whooping-cough. The faithful servant, though in considerable pain, at first attempted to get up and attend to his duties, but this Louis would not allow. The royal family joined to take care of their devoted friend. The Dauphin nursed him eagerly, fetching him what he needed and hardly leaving him all day; while Madame Elisabeth shared her medicine with him. Cléry became so ill there was talk of taking him away from the tower. At this, becoming alarmed lest, if he were once removed from his masters he might never be able to get back to them again, he put up a brave pretence of being better, and even succeeded in leaving his bed on the sixth day.

Something happened in connection with this illness that touched the Dauphin's servant very much. One evening, when Cléry was convalescent and able to be up again, he put the child to bed and went away, leaving the Prince alone. Shortly afterwards Madame Elisabeth came into the room and gave the boy a package

of medicine which she had had no opportunity to deliver direct to Cléry, and told the Dauphin to hand this to him when he came in. Long afterwards, at eleven o'clock, Cléry returned and heard the little Prince calling him in a low voice. Astonished to find the child awake, Cléry went to his bedside and asked what was the matter.

"Nothing," said Louis-Charles, "except that my aunt gave me a little box for you, and I did not want to go to sleep without giving it to you. I am glad you have come at last, for my eyes would keep shutting."

Three minutes after, the little boy was sound asleep after this exhibition of what was no mean heroism.

From some anecdotes told by Cléry we can get an idea of the effect which the imprisonment, which had now lasted many months, was having on the child's disposition and character. The Dauphin, not yet eight years old, had become a model of mature thoughtfulness and discretion. Though he was still child enough to be able now and then to take his unhappy parents out of their troubles by his gaiety and pranks, he never seemed for a moment to lose sight of his sad and precarious position. Never did he forget to act and talk with the reserve necessary to those who are surrounded by enemies; and never was he heard to speak of Versailles or

the Tuileries or any other subject which might recall painful memories to his family. If he saw arriving a guard whom he knew to be kinder than the rest, he would run to the Queen to tell her about it, saying with the greatest delight, "Mamma, it is Mr. So-and-so to-day." Once he seemed to recognise one of the guards as some one he had seen before, but the man could not prevail upon him to tell where they had met. Finally, leaning towards the Queen, he whispered to her, "It was on our journey to Varennes, Mamma."

The Dauphin's strangely mature sensitiveness shows itself in another incident recounted by Cléry. A mason was one day working in one of the tower rooms, making holes for great bolts to safeguard the prisoners, and when he went away to eat his lunch the Dauphin commenced to amuse himself by playing with his tools. At this Louis, the workman-king, took the hammer and chisel from the boy's hands and showed him how they should be used. A few minutes later the mason returned, and moved at seeing Louis so employed, said to him, "When you leave this tower you can say you have worked yourself to build your own prison."

"Ah!" answered the King, "but when and how shall I leave it?"

At this the Dauphin burst into tears, while

Louis, dropping the hammer and chisel, went back to his room, where "he walked up and down with great strides."

Not long after this, the Temple regulations became yet more stringent. Early in December it was decreed that all sharp instruments should be taken away from the prisoners, and this order was carried out with the most minute exactitude—razors, penknives, scissors, curling-tongs, and various toilet implements being all removed. It was even debated at some length whether the royal family should be permitted to use knives and forks at table. Some of the guards thought no table silver should be allowed, others saw no harm in forks, but thought there ought to be no knives. Finally, it was decided to let the prisoners continue to eat in the old way, but to remove knives and forks the moment meals were finished. These regulations caused the greatest inconvenience to the prisoners. One day Madame Elisabeth, mending the King's clothes, had for lack of scissors to cut the thread with her teeth.

"What a change!" said Louis sadly. "At your pretty house at Montreuil you lacked for nothing."

"Ah, my brother," said she, "do you think I could feel any regrets when I am sharing your misfortunes?"



Hardly had this decree been carried out when the royal family heard the appalling news that the King was to be taken before the Convention and tried. A few days later, on the 11th December, the Dauphin and his parents were waked at five o'clock in the morning by the sound of commotion coming from all over Paris, and, hearing the noise, they knew that Louis's trial was about to commence. After breakfasting upstairs with the Queen, the child and his father went downstairs as usual to Louis's room, where, despite his anxiety, the King played a game of Siam with Louis-Charles. Twice the Dauphin found himself unable to play beyond the number sixteen.

"It is strange," said he discontentedly, "that whenever I reach the number sixteen I lose the game." And at these words Cléry, who stood near, fancied he saw a startled expression pass over the face of the sixteenth Louis.

At eleven o'clock the mayor of Paris and some members of the Commune came to the Temple to tell Louis he was to be taken before the bar of the Convention and interrogated. Already the Dauphin had been parted from Louis, and carried away without any explanation to his mother's room. At one o'clock Louis left the Temple for the first time in four months.

Meanwhile, in the rooms upstairs, Marie-

Antoinette and her children were waiting in the deepest anxiety and distress; for despite every effort to get news from the guards, it was impossible to secure the slightest information about what was going on. At dinner-time the family went down as usual to dine in Louis's rooms, but beyond the fact that the King was no longer there, they learned nothing. Returning upstairs, Cléry was able to find an opportunity of talking to Madame Elisabeth while the Queen, with feminine tact, kept the solitary guard occupied with conversation about himself, his affairs, and his parents. While the delighted young man's attention was thus engaged, Cléry was able to give Madame Elisabeth an idea of what had happened since the royal family separated from Louis at breakfast time, and to tell her of his fear that in future the King would not be allowed to see them.

The two spoke of Louis's probable fate. Cléry, perhaps insincerely, said he felt sure the sentence at worst would be merely exile.

"No," said the Princess, "he will die a victim to his goodness and his love for his people. . . . I have no hope that he will be saved." And she went on gloomily to wonder whether the Convention would satisfy itself with trying the King, or would bring Marie-Antoinette also before its bar.

Cléry, they realised, would not be allowed in future to pass between the isolated King and the family, so it was necessary to arrange some manner of communicating news. The ingenious servant proposed that he should continue to take charge of the Dauphin's clothes, although the child would now be under the care of his mother, and in sending up every few days what would be necessary for the little Prince, an opportunity might be found to send a message as well. This plan suggested another idea to the Princess, and handing Cléry one of her own handkerchiefs, she bade him keep it so long as Louis remained in good health. "If, however, he is ill," said she, "you will place it amongst my nephew's linen." The method of folding the handkerchief was to denote to his family the sort of illness from which the King suffered.

At last, when the conversation had lasted about an hour, the poor conspirators commenced to fear lest Marie-Antoinette's powers of distracting the guard might be nearly at an end, and they were consequently forced to bring their talk to a close. At half-past six the King returned to the Temple, and Cléry's prophecy proved only too true. Orders had been given that he should be kept separate from his family, and this order was carried out, although both

Louis and the Queen demanded insistently that the family should be reunited. The Dauphin passed the night with the Princesses, and since his bed was still downstairs in the King's rooms, Marie-Antoinette gave him hers, while she, torn with grief and anxiety, sat up all night.

The next day Marie-Antoinette repeated her request that the King might be reunited with his family, or if this was impossible, that the children might at least see him sometimes. On the 15th December, the Council-General sent its reply, which was to the effect that the Dauphin and his sister might see the King, but only on condition they were absolutely separated from their mother until after the trial. Placed in this cruel dilemma, Louis decided to leave the children with Marie-Antoinette, both because he had not the time, preoccupied as he then was, to take care of them properly, and also because he generously preferred to be lonely himself rather than that his wife should make any further sacrifices.

Life in the Temple, gloomy and depressing at best, now became doubly sad, when to its other deprivations were added terrible anxiety and loneliness. The Dauphin and the Princesses no longer went for walks in the garden, nor did Louis. "I have no heart to walk about alone," said the King. Louis in his rooms

downstairs passed his days in considering his defence and talking to his counsel, who paid him visits every evening. In the rooms above his head his poor family, constantly uneasy and distressed, spent their time in wondering what his fate would be, and in trying to arrange means of communicating with him.

It was not long before they hit on a method, and one day Turgy, the faithful kitchen servant, delivered to Cléry a note which Madame Elisabeth had slipped into his hands when she gave him her table-napkin after dinner. This note was written in pin-pricks, and in it the Princess begged Louis to write her a letter. This the King did, and an answer to his letter was duly delivered by Turgy, hidden in a ball of cotton which he tossed under Cléry's bed as he passed the door of the King's apartments. This interchange of letters continued regularly, and after a time Cléry and Madame Elisabeth, who seem to have shared a genius for these miniature conspiracies, effected an arrangement by which notes could be let down and drawn up at night by a cord which was hung from the window of the Princess's room to that directly underneath. It was by these means presumably that Louis learned of Madame Royale's illness. The Princess developed some trouble with her foot, and the King was greatly

distressed and alarmed. Another thing which made Louis unhappy was not being able to be with his daughter on the fourteenth anniversary of her birth. "To-day is her birthday," said he with emotion, "and I am not with her."

Two other holidays took place during this sad time. Christmas, the day preceding his second visit to the Convention, Louis spent in writing his will, that dignified and touching document in which he laid down certain rules for the guidance of his son, "if he should ever have the misfortune to become King." His son was to remember that he should give all his energies to securing the welfare of his subjects; he should show every gratitude to those who had befriended his father and suffered for him, and he should forgive all those who had caused him pain and suffering.

On the first of January Cléry alone offered greetings to this dethroned King. Louis returned them sadly, exclaiming as he did so, "What a New Year!"

Of what happened meantime to the Dauphin and his mother upstairs we have no detailed account, nor indeed do we need any. A little imagination is all that is necessary to picture for us those interminable anguished days of waiting that the poor little Prince passed amongst the weeping Princesses. Can we not see him

sitting about sadly in corners, talking to his sister, his childish mind full of questioning and anxiety? Probably every now and again his boyish high spirits would make him throw off the cloud which oppressed them all, and he would burst into laughter or play. Then with a sudden prick of conscience that he was enjoying himself in the midst of so much unhappiness, he would stop his games with a start and run to beg his mother's pardon with a mute kiss and hug. Then he would go back to his corner again and leave Marie-Antoinette and Madame Elisabeth to their gloomy conjectures as they sat talking, low-voiced, together side by side. No father to give him lessons, no Cléry to play games with him, no garden to run about in, nothing but some darkened prison rooms and the company of three poor women wincing under the terrible blow which in their hearts they knew must fall—such was the Dauphin's life during those weeks of waiting.

In this way more than a month passed. Finally the end came. It has often been said that Madame Royale's narrative of what took place during her captivity is cold and unfeeling, and sometimes it is impossible to disagree with this condemnation. Yet, in the words in which she tells of how the waiting family heard the news that the King was to die, we have a

sentence as tragically suggestive as any other in all history and literature. She has just spoken of how a little hope had been given them that Louis would be spared. Then she says, "On Sunday, January 20th, at seven in the evening, the family learned of his sentence from the newsvendors who came to cry it under the windows." Picture the waiting Princesses and the little boy, their nerves stretched to breaking-point by cruel suspense, suddenly listening to hear, rising through their shuttered windows, the shouted words, "Capet condemned! The tyrant to die!" Was ever harsh news delivered more harshly?

At half-past eight that evening the family were allowed to go down to have a last interview with Louis. The Queen led her son by the hand, behind followed Madame Elisabeth and the young Princess. When they reached the door they all flung themselves into the King's arms, and for several minutes there was a silence, broken only by the noise of their sobbing. Then Louis recounted his trial to them, giving excuses for those who had made him die. The story finished, he turned to the Dauphin, who now sprang from the position of simple child to that of the unhappy inheritor of the Bourbons' terrible legacy, and commenced to talk to him on religious subjects, and to command him to pardon those





THE LAST FAREWELL OF LOUIS XVI AND HIS FAMILY  
*From an engraving by Staudin after the painting by Bouché*



who had caused his father's death. Wishing to make such an impression on the bewildered and distraught boy as he would never forget while he lived, Louis lifted him upon his knees.

"My son," said he solemnly, "you have heard what I have just said—that is, that you are never to think of avenging my death—and you have promised; but since an oath is something stronger than ordinary words, swear, lifting up your hand, that you will carry out the last wish of your father."

The boy, crying wildly, obeyed him.

Marie-Antoinette was anxious that the family should stay with the King all night, but this Louis refused to allow, telling her that he needed to be alone and quiet to prepare for what was before him. She asked at least that they should be permitted to come back next day to say good-bye, and to this the King agreed. Finally, after an hour and three-quarters, the harrowing interview ended. It is almost incredible that Cléry, an eye-witness, is right in saying that the four guards had stood by all the time without the slightest apparent emotion. At a quarter past ten the family rose to go. The King got up first and took the Dauphin by the hand, Marie-Antoinette holding the child's other hand, and slowly they went toward the door.

"I assure you," said Louis, "that I will see you again to-morrow morning at eight."

"You promise?"

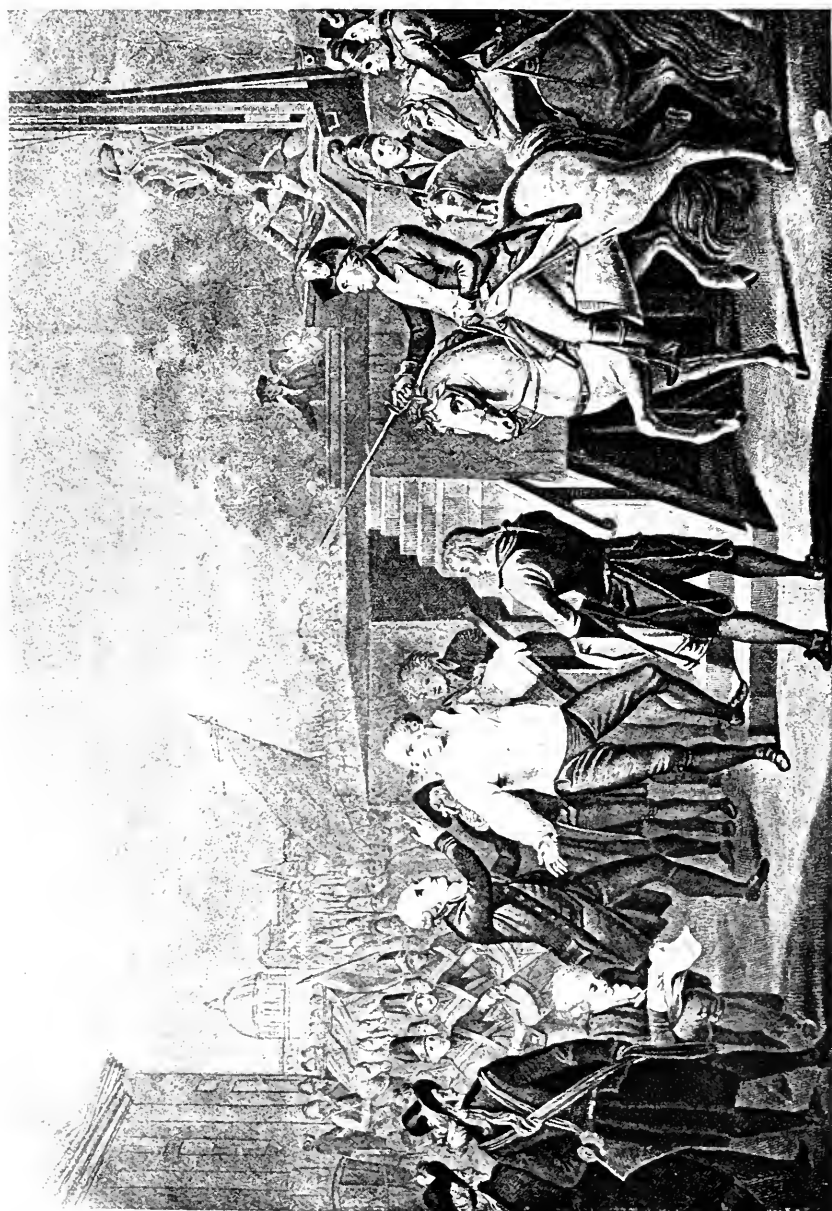
"Yes, I promise," answered the King.

"Ah! why not at seven?" Marie-Antoinette asked piteously.

"Very well, then ; at seven. Good-bye."

At the sound of the word "good-bye" the family burst again into sobbing, and Madame Royale fell fainting at her father's feet, which, all in her unconsciousness, she embraced tightly. At last Louis tore himself away from them ; the double door was shut ; they had seen the King for the last time.

Upstairs, the Queen had barely strength to undress the Dauphin and put him to bed. Then she threw herself down just as she was, and all night they heard her trembling with cold and grief. At five o'clock the drums commenced beating, and from that time they were in constant expectation of being summoned to go downstairs for their promised interview with the King. Louis, however, had given directions to his guards that they should not be allowed to visit him again, for to see them would unnerve him too terribly at a time when he needed all his strength. Not knowing this, however, the Dauphin and the Princesses waited from minute to minute for the call. At ten, the Queen tried



THE EXECUTION OF LOUIS XVI

*From an engraving by Silano after the painting by Benard*



to persuade the children to take some food, but they refused.

Soon they heard the report of firearms and the rolling of drums. The populace outside and those who guarded the Temple commenced to shout joyfully. At this they knew Louis was dead, and by the side of his mother, speechless in her grief, the little Prince burst into tears.

At ten minutes past ten on the morning of January 21, 1793, the Dauphin Louis-Charles, prisoner in the great tower of the Temple, became King of France.

## CHAPTER X

### A LITTLE KING OF SORROWS

IN the darkened room of the Temple, surrounded by three weeping Princesses, the jeers of gaolers and populace ringing in his ears, the new King came into his inheritance. A week later a proclamation, issued by the Comte de Provence, his uncle, then a refugee at Hamm in Westphalia, proclaimed to the foreign powers the accession of the child king:—

“We declare”—so reads the proclamation—“that the Dauphin Louis-Charles, born the twenty-seventh day of the month of March 1785, is KING OF FRANCE AND OF NAVARRE, under the name of Louis XVII., and that, by right of birth as well as the fundamental laws and customs of the kingdom, we are and shall be Regent of France during the minority of the King, our nephew and seigneur.”

In nearly all the countries of Europe the new King was recognised. The death of his father had aroused nothing but horror all over the civilised world, and detestation for revolu-



tionary France. In England, first to hear of the tragedy, grief was so great that the theatres were closed, and indignation so hearty that the French ambassador was immediately dismissed. In other countries, feeling was much the same. The Russian Empress, the great Catharine, decreed banishment to all French people in her territory who refused to acknowledge formally their allegiance to the new King. In short—as has been said by an early historian—Louis XVII. was king everywhere except in France.

And yet even in France, torn as she was by revolution within and foreign wars without, there were many who declared for Louis XVII. Even before the Comte de Provence issued his proclamation there were raised in many places in the provinces cries of dismay and indignation at the regicide. Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, and a number of other towns, proclaimed the new King. In La Vendée there was rebellion for his sake. Thus read the proclamation of the Vendéan chiefs: "We, commanding the Catholic and Royal armies, have taken arms only to sustain the religion of our fathers; to give back to our august and legitimate sovereign, Louis XVII., the glory and strength of his throne and crown." In like fashion the army of French refugees, under the leadership of the Prince de Conde, announced formally their allegiance to their

imprisoned sovereign. From more than six hundred parishes all over France was raised the cry, "Long live Louis XVII.!" According to Taine, if suffrages had then been free the immense majority of people—nineteen Frenchmen out of twenty—would have recognised this unhappy little boy for their king.

It was, then, in his tower, the centre of a city which persecuted him cruelly, itself in the midst of a France which loyally supported him, that the little Louis came into his kingdom. To his father, about to die, revolutionary Paris had promised grandiloquently that "the nation, always great and always just, would occupy itself with the fate of his family." Let us see how the promise was fulfilled.

Immediately after Louis XVI.'s death followed a brief lull. The Revolution had killed a king, and stopped, at once nervous and complacent, to draw breath. There was not much breathing-time, however, for most of Europe had declared war against the regicides. Carlyle has quoted one of the revolutionary leaders as saying: "The coalised Kings threaten us; we hurl at their feet, as gage of battle, the Head of a King!" This is a fine figure, but for all her brave talk France was not finding that a revolution was the pleasant and simple affair she may have fancied it in her early optimism.

All preoccupied with internal rebellion and external attack, she had little time to think of the helpless nominal King in her midst.

The royal prisoners for a time were ignored. In consequence, their condition improved. "We had now a little more freedom," wrote Madame Royale. "Our guards even believed that we were about to be sent out of France." This belief seems to have been the general one. There was some talk of exchanging them for some French prisoners held captive by Austria. The royal family itself was fully expectant of release. In a code of signals arranged between Madame Elisabeth and Turgy, by which the devoted servant was to give the Princess news of the outside world, the following direction appears: "If they think we shall still be here in the month of August, hold the napkin in your hand." Evidently the optimistic Princess supposed the chances were that they would not be there in August; and she was quite right, though not in the way she hoped. For in August Marie-Antoinette was at the Conciergerie awaiting trial for her life, while the young King was under the care of his cobbler "instructor," Simon, and of the five who had come together into the Temple just a year before, only two remained together, Madame Royale and her aunt.

It cannot be supposed, however, that the increased personal liberty that came to the prisoners after Louis XVI.'s death, or even the hope of release they entertained, could do much to make happy the bereaved prisoners, the widowed Queen and fatherless children. Even the little King—child as he was—was heart-broken.

"My boy," said Marie-Antoinette, trying to cheer him, "you should think of the good God."

"I have thought of Him," answered Louis-Charles—so the story runs—"but when I try to think of God it is always poor papa who comes before my eyes."

As for the Queen herself, her desolation was pitiful. For a month she sat there in her prison, refusing to go to walk in the garden, because to do this she would have to pass the door of the rooms where the murdered King had lived. No hope could touch her heart, and she was quite indifferent to her fate. Says her daughter: "She would sometimes look at us with an expression of pity that made us shudder." But presently the illness of the young Princess grew more serious, and this "fortunate circumstance"—to quote her own pathetic phrase—made a diversion for poor Marie-Antoinette. Finally, at the end of February, fearing that want of air would injure the health of the King, Marie-



LOUIS XVII, KING OF FRANCE AND NAVARRE

*From an engraving by N. Houffon*



Antoinette roused herself from her apathy and sought permission to go with her family for walks on the leads of the tower. This was granted, as was also her demand for mourning for them all. If the excitements of the Revolution had not robbed Paris of all sense of paradox, it might have struck the revolting city as a curious circumstance that it should one day make the Queen a widow, and but a few days later complacently provide her with weeds in which to bemoan her widowhood.

However that may be, Marie-Antoinette got her mourning—"the simplest things," as she had herself preferred. Looking at her children dressed in their new black clothes, the Queen exclaimed, "You will wear them long, but I for ever!"

Affliction was not allowed to interrupt the amateur education of Louis-Charles, who his mother believed would one day actually rule over the country of the Bourbons. The two Princesses continued as best they could the lessons commenced by Louis XVI. Lepitre, one of the Temple guards, in referring to these lessons, says: "It was impossible not to be touched by the sight of the young King—barely eight years old—bending over his little table, reading the History of France with the greatest attention, then repeating what he had read, and listening

eagerly to the observations of his mother or aunt. The most savage among the commissioners could not altogether restrain their emotion."

It was this same Lepitre who wrote the words of a song—Madame Cléry wrote the music—called "Filial Piety," which the sympathetic commissioner offered to Louis-Charles. A week later when he came to the Temple, Marie-Antoinette called him into one of the rooms, where he found the two children ready to sing his composition. "The daughter of Louis XVI.," says Lepitre, "sat at the harpsichord, and beside her was her mother, with her son in her arms, trying, in spite of the tears that streamed from her eyes, to direct her children's playing and singing. Madame Elisabeth stood beside her sister, and mingled her sighs with the sad tones of her royal nephew's voice."

It was, as may be imagined, a very touching scene, though—to tell the truth—Lepitre's verses are far from reaching the highest standard of poetry. "Ah what! thou weapest, oh, my mother!"—so they commence; while the final couplet of the first verse makes the little King question whether he can complain of his fetters, since his mother shares them.

Paris had for the time forgotten the royal prisoners. It was not long, however, before the



revolutionists awakened to the fact that the King, though he was very little and entirely helpless, was far from negligible—that he was, in fact, a hostage worth his weight in *assignats*. Now that all royalists had proclaimed their allegiance to him, his importance was tremendous. Though the royalists might gain all else, the revolutionaries held always—so long as Louis-Charles remained in the Temple—the royalists' leader, their figure-head, their *raison d'être*. So long as Louis XVI. was prisoner in Paris, it was impossible not only for his adherents to gather around him, but also impossible for them to gather around anybody else. In the person of this eight-year-old child the revolutionaries held more than one French king; they held every French king. The whole essence of royalty was represented in the little prisoner, and it did not take his captors long to realise a fact of such immense significance, and to understand that, whatever else might happen, Louis XVII. must remain safe in their hands.

At the end of March, therefore, the Council-General took precautions to ensure the safety of the prisoners and to prevent, if possible, any chance of attack or escape. For this purpose big screens were put up around the parapet of the tower, so that all view was cut off, while every chink was stopped up with the greatest care. Early in April, moreover, a series of

stricter rules was drawn up for the conduct of the Temple guards:—No one was to make a plan of the tower; the commissioners were to hold no talk whatsoever with the prisoners; there should always be two commissioners near the prisoners—in fact, in their apartments; the commissioners should neither send nor receive letters without communicating with the Council of the Temple. No precaution was spared to render safe the casket in which the Revolution kept its prize jewel.

On the other hand, if the revolutionaries realised the value of their prisoner, so too did the royalists, and while the Council-General was building walls and passing regulations, faithful friends of the crown were, on their side, making plans, writing letters in secret ink, and conspiring in corners in the hope of saving their King and his family. Of the many extraordinary intrigues and episodes in Louis-Charles's life, the series of plots formed in the spring of 1793 to save him from the Temple are amongst the most romantic.

The first plot of the series was hatched almost as soon as Louis XVI. died. It was on the 2nd February that the Chevalier de Jarjayes, for many years one of the most faithful of Bourbon subjects, received a visit which astonished him very much. His visitor was obviously, from his

dress and his manners, a violent revolutionary ; he was, in fact, a man who had particularly distinguished himself in the cause of liberty.

M. de Jarjaves, naturally enough, received him coldly, and this coldness only redoubled when the stranger made the surprising proposal that the royalist should join him in a plot to deliver the royal family from the Temple. "Here is a trap, to be sure!" thought de Jarjaves to himself. His visitor, however, was prepared for suspicion. He handed the royalist a letter.

"You may have confidence"—so the note read—"in the man who will speak to you in my behalf and will give you this letter. His sentiments are known to me ; for five months he has not changed. Do not put much trust in the wife of the man who is shut up here with us. I do not trust either her or her husband." And this note was in the hand of Marie-Antoinette. The revolutionary's credentials were of the highest.

This man, Toulan by name, had been the most enthusiastic of anti-royalists. Almost immediately after the royal family were shut up in the Temple he had gone there as a guard ; no sooner did he see the Queen than he became, without arousing the suspicions of his colleagues, her firmest partisan. Those who cannot see Marie-Antoinette except through a rose haze of romances and love-affairs have said that Toulan

loved the Queen, but this is without any doubt a fable. What moved the revolutionary was that blood-relation of love—pity. It was this humble citizen of the republic who formed the first plan to save the prisoners; and, consulting with the Queen, procured from her the letter of introduction to M. de Jarjays, as an experienced and faithful man, who might act as his accomplice and adviser.

De Jarjays, still a little suspicious it may be, wished to go and see Marie-Antoinette in prison, to talk over the project with her; and Toulan, by exercise of a really remarkable ingenuity, was able to accomplish this seemingly impossible visit. There was, so it happened, a lamplighter who came every evening to the Temple, frequently bringing with him his two children. To this man Toulan told a fiction about a republican friend of his who was anxious to amuse himself by going to look at the captive King in the Temple. The lamplighter consented to let this curious person masquerade in his own filthy clothes, and so disguised, the Chevalier entered the Temple unsuspected, a few days later, and had an interview with the Queen. Their talk was of necessity a short one, but it was enough to assure de Jarjays of Toulan's absolute trustworthiness, and to give him and Marie-Antoinette a chance to sketch out roughly the plan of escape.

It was now necessary to find a third accomplice, some one who could work with Toulan inside the Temple. The Queen suggested Lepitre, and though the amateur poet was far from being so unselfish and devoted a man as Toulan, he was sympathetic and faithful enough, particularly after a talk which he had with de Jarjayes, in the course of which it is said that some money changed hands.

The time had come to settle the details of the plot. Towards the end of February nearly everything was arranged. Here was the plan: Marie-Antoinette and Madame Elisabeth were to escape from the Temple in the disguise of their own guards; uniforms were made for them, and Toulan, always ingenious, smuggled in hats. For Madame Royale another disguise was arranged. It will be remembered that the lamplighter, by whose unwitting aid de Jarjayes had been able to visit the Queen, often brought with him to the Temple his two children. It was in the clothes of one of these children that the young Princess was to escape. As for the young King, it has been said that he was to leave the Temple disguised as the other of the lamplighter's children. This, according to M. Paul Gaulot, who has written an interesting book about this conspiracy, and also according to the memoirs left by Turgot, was not the case.

The arrangement was that the child should be carried out in a basket covered with linen. The task of carrying him out was entrusted to Turgý, and the faithful servant accepted it with delight.

In this way were they to escape from the Temple, but one great difficulty remained. In Marie-Antoinette's letter to de Jarjays she had warned him against the man and his wife who were shut up with them in the Temple—that is, the Tisons. Tison had always his eyes open, his ears alert for possible plots and intrigues; it was felt it would be impossible to accomplish the escape successfully unless he and his wife were got out of the way. It was therefore arranged to drug the two spies shortly before the escape would take place. By this means it would be several hours before those at the Temple could start in pursuit of the fugitives, for their departure would not be discovered until half-past nine, when supper was brought to the prisoners, and even then much time would be lost in breaking through the two great doors of their rooms. In the meanwhile, the prisoners and their faithful rescuers would be on their way to the coast of Normandy, where near Le Havre a boat was to be waiting ready to carry them to England. The journey from Paris to the sea was to be made in three little carriages: one for the Queen, the King, and the Chevalier;

a second for Madame Royale and Lepitre, and a third for Madame Elisabeth and Toulan. It had been suggested they should go in a berlin, but at the mere mention of the vehicle so intimately connected with the terrible fiasco of Varennes, Marie-Antoinette had shuddered. Choice fell, therefore, on the three small carriages.

All was arranged; and success, though far from certain, seemed very likely. That the carefully and intelligently conceived plan came to nothing but disappointment, is in all probability the fault of Lepitre. This man, unsuccessful as a poet, was doubly a failure as a conspirator. Vain and romantic, he revelled in plannings, in secret meetings, and hidden notes; but when it became time to act, his nerve and energy failed him. Again and again he raised objections and difficulties to a plot which, if it were to be carried out at all, must needs be carried out promptly. At last it was too late. For various reasons—some of which we have pointed out in speaking of the tremendous importance of Louis XVII. as a prisoner—popular attention was drawn anew to the Temple, and precautions were redoubled in guarding the royal family. The chance of escape was lost, for under the present conditions failure would have been nearly certain. It was all the fault of Lepitre.

Toulan and the Chevalier, though discouraged

were not even now utterly hopeless. Since the first plan had failed, they determined on a second. This was to save the Queen alone, since at that moment she seemed to be in greater danger than the rest. At first Marie-Antoinette would not hear of the idea, but finally, after much persuasion, she consented, and arrangements were made for her escape. Suddenly, at the last moment, the Queen changed her mind again. She could not, even to save herself, leave her children.

"We have had a pretty dream, that is all," she wrote bravely to de Jarjays. ". . . My son's interest is the only thing that influences me, and however happy I might be to escape from here, I cannot consent to separate myself from him. . . . I could take no pleasure in anything if I had left my children behind. I give up our idea without regret." Toulan and de Jarjays now lost hope, but there was another to take their place.

This successor was that romantic and mysterious figure, the Baron de Batz, who led a forlorn hope to save Louis XVI. on his way to the scaffold, who engineered the famous Carnation Conspiracy, an attempt to deliver Marie-Antoinette from the Conciergerie, and who promised a million to the man who would save the Queen. De Batz, a Gascon, a man of



wonderful charm and audacity, a typical hero of romance translated by some miracle into real life, having failed to save Louis XVI., made up his mind, early in February, that he would save Marie-Antoinette. Where Toulan and de Jarjayes had failed, he would succeed.

His plan was of the simplest. At midnight on a certain day the Princesses, disguised in long military coats, were to mingle with the guards, the little King in their midst, and were to be smuggled out of the Temple. De Batz was to provide himself with a sufficiently large number of accomplices, to make up, on that day, the entire guard of the Temple. Once outside, the royal family would be taken to a house in the country and hidden there.

The day came; the prisoners were warned; at eleven o'clock all was going splendidly, when suddenly a banging was heard outside the Temple. It was Simon, the future guardian of Louis XVII. He had received an anonymous letter betraying the plot; and had arrived just in time. De Batz's audacious scheme was merely another failure—another of those misfortunes which met this unluckiest of queens at every turning. Even when, months later, the devoted Mrs. Atkyns penetrated into the Queen's cell at the Conciergerie and tried to save the royal prisoner, it was merely to meet another

disappointment. The evil eye that watched over poor Marie-Antoinette through all her career never blinked, even for an instant.

Two things which took place at about this time put further difficulties in the way of attempts at escape. One of these was the Tison episode, the other was the illness of Louis XVII. Tison and his wife, always ardent spies on the prisoners, became greatly annoyed one evening because a stranger had been admitted into the Temple to bring some clothes to Madame Elisabeth, while their own daughter, of whom they were passionately fond, was excluded, and Tison himself let fall some expressions which, being reported to the mayor, aroused his suspicion. The two Tisons were examined, and made all sorts of accusations against the royal family, saying they had surreptitious correspondences with their friends, and naming Toulan and Lepitre as persons who had assisted in this. In consequence of this accusation there was made, shortly afterwards, a most minute search of the prisoners' rooms.

"The searchers came at half-past ten o'clock, when my mother and I had just gone to bed," says Madame Royale. "My poor brother was asleep; they tore him from his bed in order to search it, and my mother took him up shivering with cold." All they found, however,

in the course of a search which lasted till four in the morning, was a tradesman's card which Marie-Antoinette had kept for some reason or other, a stick of sealing-wax, and a religious token, "a heart dedicated to our Saviour," which belonged to Madame Royale. They went away, greatly exasperated at having made so insignificant a haul.

A few days later the searchers returned and examined Madame Elisabeth privately and with much solemnity on the subject of a hat they had found in her room. They asked where she got it, and how long she had had it, and why she kept it. She answered that it had belonged to Louis XVI., and that she kept it as a memento. Presumably this was true, though the hat might, perhaps, have been a remnant of the disguise provided for the Toulan-de Jarjayes attempt at escape. At any rate the municipal officers took the episode with a truly comic seriousness, and replying that the hat was a "suspicious circumstance," insisted on carrying it away.

Madame Tison reproached herself bitterly for all the trouble she had caused by her accusations, and tormenting herself with remorse in the confinement of the Temple, she at last went mad. The first the prisoners knew of this was when one day la Tison commenced to talk aloud to herself. At this the young Princess started to

laugh, and her mother and aunt "looked at her with an air of satisfaction," observing with pleasure her rare moment of gaiety. La Tison's condition soon grew very serious. "She raved of her crimes, and of her denunciations of prisoners, and of scaffolds, the Queen, the royal family, and all our misfortunes" . . . writes Madame Royale. "Her dreams must have been dreadful, for she screamed in her sleep so loud that we heard her." In her extravagant repentance this poor creature was constantly flinging herself at the feet of the Princesses to beg their forgiveness, and, despite the injuries she had done them, the royal ladies treated her very gently. At last the unfortunate woman was pronounced quite mad, and taken away to the hospital. There a woman belonging to the police was placed to watch her, to gather whatever words she might let fall in her frenzy about the royal prisoners.

Two things were mentioned as having happened at this time to make escape difficult. The Tison denunciations naturally attracted public attention—averted for a moment by the thousand other worries and troubles which Paris bore on her shoulders—to the Temple. However, despite this renewed attention, the prisoners might have been able to join in further daring schemes had it not been for the little King's illness.

Early in May the boy complained of a pain in his side, and one evening he was seized with a violent fever and headache. The pain in his side also continued, and was so bad he would not lie in bed, because he felt as if he were suffocating. Marie-Antoinette was greatly alarmed, and demanded a doctor. One of the guards, however, having seen the child in the morning, when the fever was naturally less severe, reported to the Council that there was nothing wrong. The Queen's demand was in consequence laughed at, and she was assured there was nothing the matter with the little prisoner, and that it was only her maternal anxiety that made her magnify trifles. At last a doctor came, and on his second visit, when he saw the King in the afternoon (he came first in the morning, and gained much the same impression as had the guard) he pronounced the illness even more serious than Marie-Antoinette had feared. For several weeks the doctor visited Louis-Charles every day, and took the trouble, moreover, to hold consultations outside with Brunier, the physician who had tended the royal children since their infancy, and could therefore give the prison doctor information about the boy's constitution.

Louis XVII.'s illness was a serious one. His sister tells us that from this time his health

began to decline, and was never re-established. "Want of air and exercise," says she, "did him great mischief, as well as the kind of life this poor child led, who, at eight years of age, passed his days amongst the tears and terrors of his friends, and in constant agony and anxiety." It is possible, however, that Madame Royale, living as she did so narrow and sad a life, somewhat exaggerated the seriousness of the child's condition.

During these days when Marie-Antoinette was plotting for her escape, and little Louis was suffering from his illness, Paris without was growing more and more preoccupied with the fate of the captive King. This child, indeed, had become the bogey of all true republicans. Was there sound of a popular uprising in the city—it meant Louis XVII. had escaped from the Temple. Did one of their number show lessened enthusiasm in the cause of liberty—it must be because he was conspiring to put Louis XVII. on the throne. Louis XVII., a constant possibility, an unceasing danger, hung always over the republic. Hardly a day passed that there was not heard some new and alarming rumour about the King whom Paris had dethroned but could not get rid of.

In the first place, the almost successful plot of escape disturbed the revolutionaries and put them into a state of continued uneasiness about this

invaluable prisoner of theirs. Even more alarming were the frequently repeated expressions of sympathy for the child on the part of the people. That this sympathy with Louis XVII., both as a person and as the representative of a cause, was very strong, even in Paris, is incontestable. We read of men who were arrested for crying, "Long live Louis XVII.!" of a priest who endangered himself by praying publicly for "the King," of some one who was accused of having written on the walls of a Paris street the words: "*Vive le roi! Vive Louis XVII.!*" One Boucher, a dentist, was guillotined in the spring of 1793 for his anti-revolutionary sentiments, and from the scaffold he addressed the spectators as follows: "Is it not curious to see a man perish for having said we need a king? Yes, we need one: Long live Louis XVII.!" and then, turning to the executioner, he said, "Guillotine me." "The national archives," writes M. Lenôtre,<sup>1</sup> "are full of reports attesting to this unanimous, despairing demand of a starving people for its old masters. . . . 'A King or bread!' became the cry."

These cries for Louis XVII. did not come entirely, however, from the half-starved and the fanatical. The re-establishment of the Bourbons was no mere dream. Half Paris lived in

<sup>1</sup> *Le Baron de Batz*, by G. Lenôtre.

momentary fear—or hope—of the re-establishment. If there was a commotion by night people woke up with the question on their lips, “Have they put the little Capet on the throne?” It was reported the Convention had broken up. There were people who capered and danced about in the streets for joy. “We are rid of these brigands,” they cried; “they are going at last!” and all their talk was of the boy in the Temple. This public preoccupation with the thought of Louis XVII. was not as ill-founded as might be supposed. There were times during the spring of 1793 when the re-establishment was a distinct and very real possibility.

In May an astonishing revelation was made to the effect that there was a conspiracy being nursed to attack the Temple, to take possession of the little Capet, and with Danton as regent, to put before the people this young King with the constitution of 1791 in his hand. That Danton ever really intended to do this has not been proved.

There is no doubt, however, of the genuineness of another plot, existence of which was made public a few weeks later. All the details of this conspiracy for the escape and establishment of Louis XVII. were discovered. The date set was the 15th July, the conspirators were to meet in the Place de la Révolution, and divide into two



columns. One column would save the child from the Temple, the other would go to the Convention and force it to proclaim him king, with Marie-Antoinette as regent. The organising spirit of this daring scheme was General Dillon, who was arrested and, strangely enough, set free. He died, however, about a year later, crying from the scaffold, "Long live Louis XVII.!"

Listening to all this talk, and seeing this, to them, dangerous plot exposed, the revolutionary leaders felt something must be done to render it impossible for the little prisoner to escape. Another, though less important, factor was added to make them disapprove of the present state of things in the Temple. This was the behaviour of Marie-Antoinette towards her son, or at least the reports of this behaviour which reached the outside world. If these reports are true, it seems that misfortune did not cure the poor Queen of her fatal habit of indiscretion. The reports stated that since Louis XVI.'s death she had treated the child as King, had accorded him special honours, had given him the best place at table, and carried out as far as possible the minutæ of royal etiquette. As might be supposed, the idea that a child was being reared in kingly habits in the very midst of revolutionary Paris, and under the eye of republican guards, was unbearable. The child—in the present

circumstances—was at once a menace and an insult to the liberty of France. Something had to be done at once.

Something was done at once. A step was taken the recollection of which is one of the darkest blots on the much spattered memory of the Revolution.

## CHAPTER XI

### THAT ENIGMA—SIMON

THE association of Simon the cobbler with the little King of the Temple is without doubt the most striking episode in that short life, into which a freak of destiny crowded so much of tragedy, romance, and mystery. To Simon, the outrageous, has been given a place of dishonour amongst the worst characters in history, and in that same detested little circle that holds Nero, Judas, the Borgias, and all the heroes of infamy, we have placed this humble shoemaker of the Revolution. But has Simon deserved all the hate and abuse that have been hurled at his memory? Is his place with Nero and the rest, or does he not rather belong amongst the mighty army of the unkind, the unsympathetic, the unheroic, small bad men of the past? After studying what little there remains of positive evidence, it is this latter conclusion which seems more just. It is not that Simon has been misjudged. He has merely been overrated. Simon was simply

a bad man. He was not, he never could have been, one of the great villains.

It was on the 3rd July that Louis XVII., then a few months over eight years of age and just recovering from an illness, was separated from his mother, and all who knew and cared for him, to be given into the charge of this man.

It was between nine and ten o'clock in the evening. The child was sound asleep. The three Princesses sat in the same room, sewing and reading. A shawl was hung in front of the boy to keep the light from his eyes. Suddenly six officers entered the room.

"We have come," said they, "to notify you of the order whereby the son of Capet is to be separated from his mother and family."

"My mother," says Madame Royale, "was stricken to the earth by this cruel order; she would not part with her son; she actually tried to defend against the officers the bed where she had placed him. At this violence the shawl was shaken down, and falling on the child's head, wakened him. In a moment he understood. He threw himself into the arms of my mother, and entreated with loud cries not to be separated from her." The struggle continued; the officers threatened to call up the guard and use force, if Marie-Antoinette would not yield.

"You would better kill me than take my child



THE DAUGHTER TAKEN FROM HIS MOTHER'S ARMS  
*From an engraving by J. H. B.*

THE  
CITY OF  
NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE  
COMMISSIONER OF  
THE LAND OFFICE  
ALBANY, N. Y.  
JANUARY 1, 1884.

from me!" replied the Queen, undismayed at the threats.

Then the officers declared that, if she did not relinquish the child, they would kill both him and his sister. At this threat, though the men had, of course, no intention of carrying it out, Marie-Antoinette gave in.

Madame Elisabeth and Madame Royale dressed the King—the Queen's strength was spent. Every little garment was turned and re-turned, and passed from one Princess to the other, so that as much time as possible might be consumed and the terrible parting postponed, if only for a few minutes. At last it was finished. Marie-Antoinette took her son in her arms and gave him herself to the officers. The child clung to her, crying passionately. Then the men carried him away. He looked at his family for practically the last time. Madame Elisabeth and his sister he met again—though only once—at that terrible moment when the infamous accusation was dragged from him. His mother he never saw again except in his dreams.

It had been ordered that Louis-Charles should be put in a room apart, "the most secure in all the Temple," that he should be given into the hands of "a tutor chosen by the Council-General of the Commune." Still crying—they tell us he wept for two days without ceasing—they brought

him to the room where formerly Louis XVI. had been lodged, and there he found awaiting him the chosen tutor, the cobbler Simon. For hours he crouched miserably on a chair in the farthest corner of the room. Simon questioned him. He gave only short answers spoken through his sobs. Simon must have felt it was no very attractive position the Commune had given him, to bear constant companionship to this heart-broken, imprisoned child.

Let us leave the King of France to weep on his chair in the corner while we look back at the history of his new tutor. Antoine Simon was the son of a provincial butcher, and was now a man of between fifty and sixty. He had been always poor, and was quite illiterate—the year before he had had to learn to sign his name before he could be admitted to the Council-General of the Commune. In appearance he was robust and over the medium height, his hair was straight and black and hung down long, his complexion was swarthy. Till now he had passed amongst those who knew him as a good fellow enough. He was an ardent republican, and had already served the Revolution in many ways. Some time before, in the early days of the imprisonment, he had come to the Temple to act as one of the inspectors. While he was there he had attended to his duties with



the greatest care. As to his treatment of the prisoners, accounts contradict one another in a truly ludicrous fashion.

“This man never passed before the royal family without affecting the most despicable insolence”—so writes Cléry, who was in the Temple at that period. On the other hand, Goret,<sup>1</sup> one of the municipal officers at the prison, writes: “Everything the prisoners wanted was procured for them by the man Simon . . . who had been established permanently in the Temple to fulfil the functions, more or less, of a factotum. He was a wretched shoemaker, uneducated and ignorant, but apparently not so ill-disposed as other historians have made him appear. The Princesses summoned him fairly often to bring them anything they might require. His manner in their presence was rather free-and-easy. ‘What do you wish for, ladies?’ he would say, and he would then try to do as they desired. If they asked for something that was not in the stores of the Temple, he would run out to the shops. I have heard the Queen say, ‘We are very fortunate in having that good M. Simon, who gets us everything we ask for.’”

This enigmatic character had married, for the second time, a few years before. His new wife

<sup>1</sup> Lenôtre, “Last Days of Marie-Antoinette.”

was a woman of mature years and small personal charms. She was a squat, tubby little woman, with heavy masculine features and a pimpled face. She had formerly been a servant, and it is possible that the small annuities she received from two former mistresses made up in the eyes of the impecunious Simon for her lack of beauty. She was not, however, as unattractive in character as in appearance, being a kind, motherly old dame, fond of children and anxious to do all she could to make the little King comfortable—for she shared the duties of her husband, receiving an annual salary of four thousand livres, while Simon got six thousand. It was indeed partly on account of the capability of his wife, who had distinguished herself by the intelligence and activity she showed in nursing the wounded on the 10th August, that Simon was chosen for this responsible and well-paid post. But notwithstanding the capabilities of his wife, the selection of Simon, the illiterate cobbler, seems certainly an absurdly inappropriate choice as tutor for a child. Various explanations have been given why he—probably the most unsuitable for such a task—was picked out from all the men of Paris. Without doubt, his well-known energy and faithfulness to the republic—it was he who had discovered and checked one of the most

important schemes to save the royal prisoners—stood in his favour. Then, too, there was something grimly amusing to the republican leaders in the idea of making a cobbler the teacher and master of the son of him who had so lately been their king. It was probably Chaumette, Procurator of the Commune, and therefore the governing spirit at the Temple, who made the selection.

Chaumette with quaint generosity expressed his views about Louis XVII.'s future in these words: "I wish to have him receive a certain amount of education," said he. "I shall take him away from his family and make him lose all idea of his rank." This magnanimous purpose on the part of the son of a country shoemaker cannot but tickle the humorous. Chaumette, it is said, cherished the hope of teaching the boy a trade, and of making an honest workman of him—of him, the heir of a thousand years of kings!

For such a purpose as this Simon was an ideal instrument. There are those who assure us that instructions far more sinister than Chaumette's were given to Simon.

"What have you decided about the whelp?"—for such was one of the popular names for the son of the she-wolf, Marie-Antoinette—"What do you wish to do with him? To exile him?"

To this question, which it is alleged Simon asked of the committee in charge of the matter, the supposed answer was "No."

"Do you wish to kill him, then? To poison him?"

"No."

"What do you wish, then?"

"To get rid of him."

"He was not killed," thus runs the comment of those who believe and tell the story, "he was not exiled—he was got rid of."

Probably fabulous, this tale is one out of the mass of contradictions that cluster about the history of Simon. It would be well if we could place as little faith in all the terrible stories that are told of him, and of the six months that marked his guardianship of the King of France.

The child, weeping in his corner, refused for days to eat or to talk. He was completely mystified at what had happened to him, and in despair, the blank, hopeless sorrow of childhood. Very soon a rumour got about Paris that the boy had escaped, that he had been seen on the Boulevards and had been carried in triumph to St. Cloud. A crowd rushed to the Temple, and hearing from the guard, which was angry at not seeing him, that Louis XVII. was no longer in the prison, they became greatly excited.

A deputation from the Convention came hot-foot to investigate, and found the child playing quietly and sadly in his room.

Orders were given that he should be taken at once—and regularly every day after that—into the garden, so that the men of the guard might see him and witness to his safety. No sooner did he reach the open air than he commenced to cry loudly for his mother, and having attracted the attention of the guards, he demanded, “By what law am I separated from my mother?” This was a spirited boy indeed, who, after miserable days of little food and many tears, could stand, a mite of eight, before a crowd of rough officers and order them to explain by what law they treated him as they did. But his pitiful, brave little outburst was soon checked and gained him nothing.

Upstairs the deputation, one member of which was Drouet, the postmaster of Varennes, was visiting Marie-Antoinette, the bereaved mother.

Drouet made her a high-sounding speech. “We have come,” he said in the course of his remarks, “to find out if you need anything.”

“I need my son,” replied the Queen simply, but the deputation answered his removal was a necessary precaution, and the mother’s complaint, like the boy’s, ended fruitlessly.

It was inevitable that the child’s grief should

assuage itself somewhat, that Louis-Charles, with that merciful short memory of the very young, should become somewhat reconciled to his new life. It has been said that from the beginning Simon treated him with systematic and deliberate cruelty. The pages of M. Chantelauze and of M. de Beauchesne are full of appalling anecdotes of brutality, of accounts of positive and purposeless torture inflicted on the little prisoner. All these things, however, are far from being proved.

Take, for example, what M. de Beauchesne tells us happened one night in the middle of winter, several months after Simon came into his office of tutor. His story is that the boy had risen in his sleep, and kneeling by his bed, was saying a fevered dream-prayer. Simon waked and called his wife's attention to the little somnambulist. Then he got up, took a jug of icy cold water and flung it over the head of the sleeping boy. Louis-Charles, "without a cry," got up off the floor and returned to his soaking bed, where the only dry spot was the pillow. On this he seated himself, shivering. Simon was not satisfied. He got up again, caught the child by the hand and shook him violently.

"I'll teach you," said he, "not to say Pater-nosters and get up in the night like a Trappist."

And then, with a burst of fury, he picked up his great hobnailed boot, and in a paroxysm of frenzy flung himself on his victim. The child just in time caught in his two hands Simon's uplifted arm.

"What have I done that you want to kill me?" he asked, and Simon, brought to himself, threw the child back into his bed, where he lay through the rest of the night, silent and trembling, on the soaked, icy sheets.

This terrible story—a fair sample of many others—fails altogether to be convincing, because it is impossible to see how the incidents recounted ever came to the ears of the author. Where did the author learn in such detail exactly what happened on the night in question (the date is even given)? Simon surely would never have told a story so little to his credit, neither would his wife, and the poor little King never had a chance to bear witness about the details of his imprisonment. Yet these three are the only persons who were present. The conclusion is obvious. This story, like many another of Simon's brutality, is valueless, except as picturesque and harrowing fiction. Of actual proof that it really happened there is not a scrap.

That Simon was cruel is undoubtedly true, however. It is merely on these morbidly fanciful romances of brutality that doubt is cast—romances

which it is plain could have had no foundation in statements emanating from the three persons whose testimony alone would have been of any value regarding what took place between Simon and the child.

Simon was ordered never, under any pretext, to leave his charge. He could not go out of the Temple tower even for a moment. He was as much a prisoner as the little Capet himself. Such a life would have worn out the nerves even of a gentle man, and Simon, according to all accounts, was rough, undisciplined, and drunken. It is little to be wondered that when confinement and boredom became unendurable he made the helpless boy—necessarily hateful to one of his ardent republican views—the victim of his frayed nerves.

It is not hard to understand how unhappy Louis-Charles must have found himself with his tutor. There is none quicker than a gently-reared child to notice ugliness of appearance and dress, uncouthness of manners and roughness of speech. How repulsive must have been in his eyes the cobbler with his lank hair, and la Simon with her pimples and her coarse blue apron! How he must have shuddered at the touch of Simon's hard hands and the feel of la Simon's kisses! How he must have longed for the dear caresses of his beautiful, dainty mother, and for



the sound of her gentle voice! How terrible must have been his despair when, after his outburst in the garden, he realised he might never see her again! Poor little King, in his loneliness—so infinitely worse than that of any Crusoe on his island—he had a grief almost greater than he could bear. Surely there was no need for romantic history to paint into this picture, so simple and so terrible in its tragedy, the high, garish colours of an exaggerated Simon the Ogre, his mouth full of oaths, his arm ever raised in a blow. The Simon of reality, dirty, ill-mannered, repulsive, makes the picture little less terrible, infinitely more convincing.

Marie-Antoinette sometimes saw her child, though he never saw her. "We often went up to the tower," says Madame Royale, "because my brother went there from the other side. The only pleasure my mother enjoyed was seeing him through a chink as he passed at a distance." Standing behind a door for hours together, the Queen would wait for these glimpses of her son. So to wait for him was "her only hope, her only thought." A note written surreptitiously by Madame Elisabeth to a faithful friend during the summer says, "We see the little one every day from the staircase window, but that need not prevent you from giving us news of him." Early in August,

Marie-Antoinette was taken away from the Temple to go to the Conciergerie, and the two Princesses were left alone.

Until about this time there seems to be no reason to believe that Louis XVII. suffered cruel treatment or even physical privations, though he was often profoundly miserable, and received frequent humiliations and many unkind words. Physically, he was well cared for. He had exercise outdoors every day, he had ample food, and capable Madame Simon kept him clean and saw to it that he changed his linen. He had even toys to play with. At about the time of Marie-Antoinette's departure from the Temple, however, this régime changed. The reason for this change is of all the dark episodes of the French Revolution quite the most shameful—this innocent, affectionate child was to be forced to testify, and that in the most horrible way imaginable, against his mother.

Whatever defence may have been made of Simon hitherto, there is no condemnation too dark for the man who undertook to undermine the intellect and physique of this helpless boy for so vile a purpose. It appears that it was Hébert (Père Duchesne) who conceived the infamous idea—"the most atrocious, surely, that was ever formed in a human brain"—and it has been said that the real reason why

Simon was placed in charge of the child was that he might carry it out.

However this may be, Simon brought to bear a fiendish ingenuity on his loathsome task. In the first place, he forced Louis-Charles—naturally moderate in his appetite—to eat more than he wished, and to drink much wine, which he detested. The boy's exercise was cut down, there was less time spent in the garden, and there were no more walks at all on the top of the tower. He was allowed to read nothing but the most obscene books. In short, everything was done to render him morally and physically irresponsible. The poor child could not but succumb; "even a grown man could not have resisted such treatment."

Towards the end of August the King fell ill, and la Simon, meaning, doubtless, for the best, insisted on prescribing for him herself. The physic she gave disagreed with him badly; he grew more feverish and lay in bed for several days. As soon as he recovered, Simon recommenced his treatment. In October the vile seed which the cobbler had been planting and tending so carefully bore its fruit—poor Louis XVII. was made to commit the lowest of crimes.

It was on the 6th October that the Mayor of Paris, Hébert, Chaumette, and some others

came to the Temple to see the result of Simon's handiwork. Everything was well prepared. On the day before, Simon had kept the child fasting; on the 6th itself he had forced him to eat and drink to excess. The poor creature was but a toy in their hands. He said what they wished, he signed in a straggling hand as they bade him. This unhappy, feeble child was an easy victim. As to what Louis-Charles was forced to say, the accusations were of two sorts: one relating to various plots made by the Queen to escape from the Temple, and implicating some of the officers, the other against the personal honour of his mother—a matter at once so horrible and so absurd that we can most wisely follow the example of Carlyle, who, in speaking of it, said, "There is one thing concerning Marie-Antoinette and her little Son wherewith Human Speech had better not further be soiled."

On the following day, practically the same party returned again for the purpose of securing, if possible, admissions from the two Princesses in support of the accusation. Madame Royale was brought down into the presence of her brother. They had not met for several months, and they flung themselves into one another's arms joyfully. The child repeated his testimony of the day before. The young girl was asked questions

“about a thousand shocking things” of which they accused her mother and aunt. Scarcely understanding what was meant, she had still the presence of mind to refuse to be bullied into damaging statements, and at last she was taken back to her room, and Madame Elisabeth brought down.

Daujon, who took down the testimony, and who himself did not believe one word of it, gave the following account of the episode:—

“The young Prince,” said he, “was seated in an arm-chair, swinging his little legs; for his feet did not reach the ground. He was examined as to the statements in question, and was asked if they were true. He answered in the affirmative. Instantly Madame Elisabeth cried out, ‘Oh, the monster!’”

“As for me,” Daujon added, “I could not regard this answer as coming from the child himself, for his air of uneasiness and his general bearing inclined me to believe that it was a suggestion emanating from some one else—the effect of his fear of punishment or ill-treatment if he failed to comply. I fancy that Madame Elisabeth cannot really have been deceived either, but that her surprise at the child’s answer wrung that exclamation from her.”

It is a harrowing exercise of imagination to try to picture what must have been Marie-

Antoinette's feelings when at her trial she heard this infamous accusation brought against her by her beloved son.

A juryman said, "Citizen President, I ask you to point out to the accused that she has made no reply to the charge of which Citizen Hébert has spoken with regard to what passed between her and her son."

The Queen's reply was simple. "If I have not answered," said she, "it is because nature itself refutes such a charge against a mother. I appeal to all the mothers who are here." At this so great was the sympathy for Marie-Antoinette that Hébert must have felt he had indeed sinned in vain. Truly, no crime was ever at once so odious and so stupid as this, which harmed none but the criminal and brought sympathy to the poor woman it was intended to destroy.

Finally, they asked the Queen if she had anything more to say. This was her reply: "For my defence, nothing; for your remorse, much. I was a Queen, and you dethroned me. I was a wife, and you have killed my husband. I was a mother, and you have torn my children away from me. There is left only my blood, make haste to shed it, that you may be satisfied."

Marie-Antoinette was condemned to die next day. During the night that intervened she wrote

to Madame Elisabeth a long letter, dated "the 16th October, at half-past four in the morning." In this she said, "Let my son never forget the last words of his father, which I repeat here: 'He is never to attempt to avenge our death.' I have also to speak to you of something very painful to me. I know how much this child must have grieved you. Forgive him, my sister. Think of his age, and of how easy it is to make a child say what people wish him to, and what, moreover, he does not understand." In a postscript especially addressed to her son, the Queen said again, "He must never dream of avenging our death. I pardon all my enemies for the ill they have done."

The next morning—it was the 16th October 1793—the Queen was driven in a cart from the Conciergerie to her scaffold. At a quarter past twelve she died bravely and a queen, as she lived.

The King of the Temple was an orphan.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ORPHAN

THE boy, Louis-Charles, knew nothing of his mother's death. Indeed, with a consideration of which we should not have supposed them capable, neither the Simons nor those who succeeded them in the charge of the little King ever told him of his loss. Louis XVII. was an orphan for almost two years without ever realising it.

A dreadful story has been told by one of the picturesque historians of this period. It appears that Simon knew Marie-Antoinette was to die, but was ignorant of the exact moment when the sentence was to be executed. During the day of the 16th October he heard a disturbance outside the Temple. Simon thought this was probably occasioned by the passage of troops to attend at the Queen's death. La Simon disagreed. "They would never make such a fuss about her," said she scornfully. As neither one could convince the other, the two Simons made a bet on the subject, wagering some *ean-*





SIMON

*From a sketch by Gabriel in the Carnarlet Museum*



*de-vie*. Presently Simon learned he had been right, the Queen was dead. That evening—was ever an incident more grotesquely harrowing?—the boy shared in the cobbler's winnings, and all unconsciously drank to celebrate his mother's death.

It might have consoled the dying Queen to know that by her death her son's lot would be much improved. Simon, after securing the boy's calumination of his mother, had no further reason for ill-treating his prisoner. A little time after Marie-Antoinette's execution, Louis-Charles signed a second—and possibly even more absurd—accusation against his aunt and sister. After that he was left in peace.

Notwithstanding this improvement, however, the King was physically and mentally in a bad condition. In October, for fear he might escape, the privilege of taking walks in the garden was removed both from him and from the Simons, and although he was still allowed to take the air on the top of the tower, it was a cruel deprivation to the child not to be allowed to go into the garden. There was never any fire in the boy's room. The days he could pass with the Simons, who had a fire, but at night he was forced to remain in a damp, cold atmosphere. It is no wonder that he began to alter in health and appearance. He fell, moreover, into a state of

black melancholy. He did not realise the true wickedness of his accusations against Marie-Antoinette and his aunt, but he did, in some vague, childish way, feel that he had sinned against those he loved best, and he brooded over what he had done, turning it hopelessly over and over in his little mind.

It was a man named Barelle, a stone-mason and one of the municipal officers, who at this time brought a trifle of cheerfulness into this poor little life. This good man, a simple fellow enough, seems to have been very fond of children, and to have been especially drawn towards the small King. The two became fast friends. Louis-Charles would count the days which must elapse between the stone-mason's visits, and used to tell Simon long in advance when his big friend was due to arrive at the Temple. Of all his kindness, the child must have appreciated most Barelle's thoughtfulness in bringing to see him in the billiard-room—for there had been a billiard-table set up in the tower—little Clouet, the eight-year-old daughter of the laundress who was in the habit of washing the prisoner's linen. Louis-Charles had not since he came to the Temple seen a child of his own age, and since his separation from the royal family had seen no children at all. It may be imagined, therefore, how great a pleasure it was to him

to have a chance of playing with this little girl.

Louis XVII., though his kingdom was a pitiful one, was still at heart a king. Some royal instinct in him taught the child that kings do not accept favours without making return. It must have been a troubled moment when the poor lad set himself to finding some way of recompensing the good Barelle for his kindness. At last a bright inspiration came to him. He obtained from Simon permission to save from their table a roast chicken, this to be presented to Barelle, who, according to his calculations, should arrive on the morrow. Next day the boy waited impatiently, but no Barelle appeared. On the second day, however, the mason arrived, and Louis-Charles ran up to him eagerly with his roasted chicken. Barelle at first declined it. The child pressed it upon him.

"You ought not to refuse it," said Simon. "For two days now he has been keeping it for you," and he wrapped the pitiful little present, Louis XVII.'s stale chicken, in a bit of paper.

"Poor little lad," said the mason, a little chokily, as he pocketed the gift, "I wish I could put you in my other pocket and carry you away from here as well."

Tears came into the eyes of the child, and Simon said to him in uncouth but well-meant consolation, "Never mind, my boy; when you get out of here I will teach you to be a shoemaker." What greater ambition—so, we suppose, ran the thoughts of the republican cobbler—could any heart hold, even that of the heir of the Bourbons?

Louis-Charles had another distraction besides the society of Barelle and the child Clouet. In the lumber-room of the Temple had been found a mechanical toy, an artificial canary-bird, caged, which could flap its wings and sing a tune called "The King's March." Permission was gained to have this put in order—at considerable expense, as it happened—and the toy was placed in Louis's room. At first the prisoner was delighted, but soon, as is the habit of children where purely mechanical playthings are concerned, he grew bored with the toy which did always so monotonously the same thing, and sang always the same air. He was greatly pleased, therefore, when some real canaries were brought to him to be the companion of his uninspired toy. The child amused himself day after day in taking care of them, giving them their food and keeping their glasses filled with water. One, his special favourite, he decorated with a pink anklet, so that it might easily be distinguished

from the rest. Presently, however, an absurd little tragedy occurred. Some municipal officers were visiting the Temple, and amongst them was one of those men, apparently so common at that period, who were absolutely lacking in the faintest shadow of a sense of humour, and were endowed, moreover, with a large capacity for making fools of themselves complacently.

“What is this?” he cried indignantly. “Here is a bird singing a proscribed royalist song! And what does this decoration mean? It seems to show a distinction and a preference quite alien to our republican ideas.”

It is almost incredible that, within an hour, the cage was taken away from the poor child, and that this affair was afterwards dignified by the absurd title of “the conspiracy of the canaries.”

In December la Simon fell ill, and a doctor was called in to visit her. Just as he entered the room Simon—in jest perhaps—raised his hand against the boy. The doctor rushed forward and caught Simon’s arm.

“What are you doing, rascal?” he cried.

This interference the cobbler took in good part, which seems to indicate he had not really intended to do Louis any harm. The child was none the less appreciative. He had received

another favour; again he must make return. This time there was no need to rack his brains. He would reward the doctor after the fashion which had so greatly pleased the good Barelle. Next day the doctor returned, and was intercepted in the corridor by Louis XVII. The boy had his speech prepared, and handing the man two pears saved from his lunch of the day before, he said, "Yesterday you showed that you were interested in me. I thank you. I have only these to offer to show my gratitude. You will give me a great deal of pleasure if you will accept them."

The doctor pressed the boy's hand and pocketed the pears. When he went away—so the story runs—there were tears in his eyes. Truly, never was the little King more pathetic than at these moments of pitiful royal generosity.

Meanwhile, Simon was growing more and more discontented with his post at the Temple. We have seen how walks in the garden had been forbidden. To this deprivation were added several other material annoyances. The luxuriousness of the table, something which had particularly appealed to Simon and his wife, was reduced. The billiard games, which had been the cobbler's main diversion, were suppressed. These things were small enough in themselves,



but they looked very large in the eyes of the Simons, whose lives were nearly as restricted as that of the prisoner they guarded. It is, however, more than a little surprising to find that Simon, when at the New Year (1794) it became necessary for him to choose between his wardership at the Temple and his seat on the Commune, chose the latter. That this poverty-stricken old cobbler should have preferred the totally unpaid post on the Commune to his post at the Temple with its salary of 10,000 livres, even though his work at the Temple was somewhat uncongenial, is astonishing—it is more than astonishing; it is almost a mystery.

On the 19th January Simon, as always puzzling and enigmatic, left the Temple for some reason which has never adequately been explained.

To the vindictive royalists Simon's ultimate fate seemed a just retribution, for a few months later, on the day following the 9th Thermidor, he perished on the scaffold with Robespierre. So sudden was the cobbler's downfall and execution, that it is said his wife had hardly commenced to trouble herself at his prolonged absence from home when news came that he was dead.

As for la Simon herself, her story after she left the Temple was far more remarkable than her

husband's. Falling ill after she left the Temple, she was admitted, in 1796, to the Hospital for Incurables, where she remained until her death, some thirteen years later.

During her stay at the Incurables, la Simon made a certain very extraordinary statement about Louis XVII.—a statement which aroused much attention at that time, and one which is well worthy of attention now. She said that the Dauphin had escaped from the Temple, and that the boy who died there was not the King of France, but a substitute. Dying, she affirmed this story, and it seems likely that, whatever may have been the facts in the matter, la Simon believed implicitly in the truth of the story she told.

In considering this statement of the widow Simon we come, for the first time in this narrative, to any mention of that uncertainty surrounding the death of the child of the Temple, which has made the story of Louis XVII. the most striking of historical mysteries. On the subject of this mystery more than a thousand books and pamphlets have been published, and to the solving of it scores of historians have given years of research. There have been and are still monthly magazines published on the question, and it may be said without any danger of contradiction that there are to-day alive many serious

students who would give half their possessions to secure in exchange a definite proof of just what happened to King Louis XVII.

Did the child die in the Temple as conventional history tells us? Did he escape from the Temple? If he did escape, what subsequently happened to him?

These are questions which have never been answered convincingly.

In the present book will be attempted, in a simple fashion, something which, I believe, has not been done before. There will be told, in turn and without prejudice, the two stories of the little King: first, conventional history's account of how he died in the Temple; afterwards, the contrasting and more thrilling story of how he escaped, and of how, years later, he was resuscitated in the shape of some forty young men. Hitherto practically all writers on this subject, which in France goes by the name of "The Louis XVII. Question," have had a theory to prove, have wished, like M. de Beauchesne or M. Chantelauze, to show that the child died in the Temple; or like M. Provins or M. Barbey—to name two only of the many well-known writers on the other side of the question—to show that he did not. Necessarily the historian with a theory to prove must look at a question in a somewhat different manner from that of the

writer whose only wish is to sum up, as fairly as may be, two diametrically opposed stories, and to leave to all who read the privilege of individual choice in the answering of this sad and mysterious question.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SIX MONTHS OF SILENCE

THE six months that followed Simon's departure from the Temple mark the time of darkest mystery and horror in the life of Louis XVII.; mysterious, because we know so little of what really happened—horrible, because we know so much.

On January 19, 1794, the boy was delivered over by Simon "in good health"; on the day after the 9th Thermidor, Barras, in triumph, visited the Temple and the young prisoner. Of how the child of the Temple was treated during the intervening six months we know only enough to realise that his treatment was the cruellest outrage ever committed in any civilised country.

When Simon left the Temple there was at first question of who should be chosen to succeed him. The final decision was that "the Committee of Public Safety regards the mission of Simon as unnecessary," and declines to appoint a successor. "The members of the Council should be able to take charge of the Temple prisoners without

assistance." This decision marked the commencement of a new régime at the Temple. The members of the royal family, who till now had been treated as prisoners of State, were reduced to the condition of ordinary malefactors. As early as November of the year before, the Commune had complained bitterly against the unfairness which exalted the Capets above other prisoners, and against the wastefulness of employing two hundred and fifty men every day to guard "the vile relics of tyranny."

With Simon's departure, the Commune carried out its intentions. The children and sister of the man who had been their King were reduced to the status of pickpockets and thieves. There was no further talk of a "tutor" for the little Capet, or any one to serve the Princesses. Other prisoners had no tutors and servants, why should they? Four commissioners were sent to the Temple each day to have charge of everything. These men remained only twenty-four hours; at the end of this time they were removed and a new quartette arrived.

This less careful arrangement necessitated a stricter guarding of the little King. A new room was prepared for him—that which formerly had been occupied by Cléry. The upper half of the door of this room was cut away, and the space filled in with iron bars. The lower part

of the door was strengthened with iron plates. In the door was placed a wicket fastened with a heavy padlock.

Into this room Louis entered on January 21, the first anniversary of his father's death, though whether this coincidence was an irony of fate or of his guards we do not know. The 21st January was, during the Restoration, celebrated at the Temple by the draping of its façade with black cloth surmounted by a cenotaph and lighted tapers. In 1794 it was celebrated by the placing of Louis XVI.'s only son in this guarded room. The door was sealed with locks and bolts. It was not opened for more than six months.

Inside the room was a bed, and a sort of cradle on which, though much too short for him, the child for some reason preferred to sleep, a table and some chairs. The windows were covered over. He passed his days in a twilight. At night he had no light at all.

His food was passed to him through the wicket by a servant, who was forbidden, on pain of death, to speak to him. The luxurious meals which had delighted Simon and his wife were a thing of the past. Louis received each day soup, boiled meat, bread and water. In the same manner clean linen was given to him. From no one did he hear a word, except his

guards, who, being renewed daily, used, with the coming of each new detachment, to call through the wicket to assure themselves their prisoner was safe.

This child of eight was absolutely without resources. He was shut up in the dark, alone, without any sort of companionship or distraction. In this condition he lived for six months. What happened to him, what he did, what he thought, how he felt, we can never know. He was put away and forgotten, this little King of France, as some worn-out bit of furniture is flung into a storeroom. The hours and days went by, and the weeks and months, but how he passed them, alone in the dark, we cannot know.

Outside, the Terror was at its height. The victims of the guillotine were numbered not by hundreds but by thousands. Famine raged; France had gone mad. It is no wonder the child of the Temple was forgotten.

In May, Madame Elisabeth met the doom which had been prepared for her long before, when Louis was forced to bring his accusations against her. In November it was not believed she would "outlive the week," but for some reason there was a delay. At last one evening they came to take her away from the Temple, where she and Madame Royale were still imprisoned together. The younger Princess was



in despair, and to calm her agitation, Elisabeth promised to return.

"No, citizen," said those who had come for her, "you shall not return." The next day she was guillotined.

Meantime the old preoccupation continued, the Revolution was still brooding over the possible escape and establishment of Louis XVII. This was the cause—nominally, at least—of the death of the infamous Hébert in the spring. Robespierre charged him with plotting and taking royalist money. Danton was executed a few weeks later. It was stated he had been acting in a conspiracy to re-establish the monarchy. In June, some fifty persons were guillotined for their alleged complicity in a similar plot.

In this general massacre the centre and cause of it all was himself often in danger of the death that awaited his supposed partisans. Even in Simon's time Hébert had used to threaten the boy with the guillotine. This threat frightened the child so terribly that often he fainted when he heard it. It was not, though, a mere empty threat to frighten a child.

"The coalised Powers," said Billaud-Varenne, "should know that a single thread holds the sword which is suspended over the head of the tyrant's son. If they take another step, he will be the first victim of the people. It is by such

vigorous measures that we shall succeed in giving aplomb to our new government." That it would give the government aplomb, was indeed a strange reason for advocating the execution of a helpless, innocent little boy of eight.

Yet we can only wish that Hébert and Billaud-Varenne had carried out their threats, for the guillotine was quick and its pain soon finished; while to even the most callous imagination the picture of this child—for months alone, abandoned, terrified, in the dark—is not one it is good to look upon.

At first he seems to have taken care of himself and his room, to have washed, and changed his linen. Presently, however, the deadening effect of solitude, of lack of exercise and diversion, of bad food and bad air—the windows of his room were never opened so long as he remained in it—robbed him of interest in the care of his person. The soiled linen which, when he discarded it, he had used to put through the wicket, was no longer returned. His guards, in consequence, stopped giving him fresh linen.

He no longer cleaned his room, but lay helpless and inert in the midst of accumulations of filth. Vermin came in swarms, and rats and mice, and great black spiders such as are found in dungeons. "Everything is alive in this room," said the servant, who, as he brought the food one day,

pressed his face against the wicket to look about into loathsome darkness.

The smell from the room was so disgusting that no one could bear even to go near the door. It seems miraculous that any human being could have lived in such an atmosphere. But Louis XVII. was hardly any longer a human being, he was degraded, prostrated, atrophied.

He was no longer a miserable child. He was merely a thing that was still alive.

## CHAPTER XIV

### DEATH

WHILE this pitiful young creature who might have sat on the throne of France was lying in the midst of filth and vermin, his sister, Princesse Marie-Therese-Charlotte, was also in solitary confinement, though her isolation was not so terrible as was his. For almost fifteen months this young girl—not yet sixteen years old—was left alone. Madame Elisabeth had, however, foreseen something of this sort, and before her departure from the Temple had taught her niece how to take care of herself. The result was that Madame Royale, thanks to her aunt's forethought and to the fact that she was nearly twice as old as the poor little King, was able to keep herself clean and well.

In the account which Madame Royale has written of her captivity she speaks with disgust, and something very like contempt, of her brother's utter self-abandonment. "He should have taken better care of his person," says she; as if a poor eight-year-old child—ill, terrified, solitary, in the

dark—could be expected to take systematic care of himself, to preserve that self-respect which would force him, when weak and despondent, to get up and sweep his room, to drag about heavy pitchers of water, and to wash himself in the freezing atmosphere of that damp, unheated cell. Many a grown person would have lacked the strength of will to carry out a sanitary régime in the face of such hopeless conditions. We cannot, however, expect Madame Royale, considering the boy with the sharp, unhesitating judgment of childhood, to make allowances for him. She kept herself clean; why should not he?

Notwithstanding her intolerance, the Princess was in deep distress about the boy. Again and again she made vain demands to be allowed to join him and to take care of him.

In May, when Louis's solitary confinement had lasted some four months and his sister's had just commenced, the great Robespierre paid a visit to the Temple. The visit was a secret one. The only scanty information we have about it is furnished by Madame Royale herself.

"The officers showed him great respect," says she. ". . . He stared at me insolently, cast his eyes over my books, and after joining the municipal officers in a search, retired." It was said, though probably without much reason, that

Robespierre had conceived the strange project of marrying himself to the young Princess.

As for Louis, it is not known whether Robespierre saw him or not. One of many rumours about the little King with which the Paris of the time was filled was to the effect that Robespierre had taken the child surreptitiously to Meudon for a day or two, and then brought him back again to the Temple. Like the other rumours, this is undoubtedly a fable. We have no reason to believe that Louis left his cell for a single minute, or had any intercourse with any one whatsoever until after the uprising of the 9th Thermidor.

On the 27th July—or as the Revolution styled it, the 9th Thermidor—Robespierre was overthrown. Next morning, at six o'clock, there was heard a great noise outside the Temple. People ran to and fro, the guards called to arms, doors banged, and drums rolled. It was the victorious General Barras come to visit the prison, to look with his own eyes at the children of Capet.

For the first time in six months the door of the King's room was opened, and Barras, shining in his gold lace and gaudy costume, stood before the almost stupefied child. Nothing could better prove the deadening effect which his long abandonment had had than the fact that this sudden

visit and the appearance of the brilliantly arrayed general hardly moved the boy at all.

He was lying doubled up in the cradle-bed, and Barras was appalled at his condition and surroundings.

The general asked him why he slept in the cradle instead of the larger bed, which was also in the room.

"I like the cradle better than the bed," answered the boy, raising himself from his stupor. "I have no complaint to make against my guards."

"As he said this," writes Barras, "he looked at me and at them alternately—at me, to put himself under my protection; at them, in fear of the resentment they might show afterwards, did he utter any complaints to me."

Notwithstanding the child's pathetic discretion, Barras was amazed and disgusted at what confronted him, and left the room, declaring that extensive improvements should be made at once.

He afterwards visited Madame Royale, talked with her briefly and then left the Temple, after delivering a patriotic harangue to the guards.

Meantime, while Barras and the boy were talking together in this vile room of the Temple, Simon had died on the scaffold. It has been said that his was a well-deserved fate, but we fancy that the knowledge of it would have grieved

the King, whose guardian he had been ; for often in the dark loneliness of his cell Louis must have regretted the rough cobbler and the cobbler's wife who had combed and washed him.

That same day, so it happened, a new guardian was chosen. Barras appointed him. He was a Creole from Martinique, Laurent by name, and a man of kindly and agreeable disposition.

On the 29th July, Laurent arrived at the Temple, and for the next four months Louis was entirely under his care. He proved a far gentler master than the man who had just died. To what extent, however, he improved the child's condition is rather uncertain. There are several accounts, entirely contradictory, of how Laurent behaved when he took up his duties at the Temple. One chronicler represents him as setting to work at once to make Louis clean and comfortable. Another assures us that it was not until September that Laurent even entered the boy's cell, his condition till that time remaining practically what it had been before the 9th Thermidor.

The truth probably lies somewhere midway between these two accounts. Laurent, for some reason, did not make a great effort to carry out Barras' instructions with regard to the child. His room was cleaned, it is true, and he was provided with a new bed, the old one being in



a disgusting state. He was also bathed and put into fresh clothes. Physically, he was more comfortable, but the terrible solitude continued as before. Three times a day Laurent paid him a short visit. For the rest of the time, and during the long black nights, he was left alone.

Louis's old governess in the days when he was the petted Dauphin of Versailles and the Tuileries, investigated, some time afterwards, the events of this period. After talking the matter over with Madame Royale and with some of the Temple staff, the worthy Madame de Tourzel came to the conclusion that "the lot of the young King was not really ameliorated until he passed out of Laurent's hands."

Laurent's sole supervision of the prison ceased on November 8, when the associate for whom he had been clamouring almost ever since he came to the Temple was sent to share his work and his responsibilities. These responsibilities were no slight thing at a time when hardly a day passed without some talk in Paris of the possible escape of Louis XVII.

Laurent's associate was a man named Gomin, of whose kindly heart nothing but good has been recorded, though those who knew him speak of him as extremely timid and afraid of compromising himself.

Gomin's treatment of the little King was in

every way admirable. When he arrived at the Temple he found the child in an appalling condition. He was torpid, and seemed only half alive; he did not wish to speak nor to move, nor to interest himself in anything. All he asked was to be let alone. Physically, his state was equally pitiable. His body had grown misshapen from ill-treatment and lack of exercise. His back was bent, and his legs and arms were unnaturally long. His face, however, still retained something of its old beauty.

At first it was difficult to do much for the child. Laurent and Gomin both feared to compromise themselves by any great show of sympathy, and were forced to leave him in almost unbroken solitude. At nine in the morning they visited him and saw him have his breakfast. At two he dined—eating, as formerly, a coarse, unappetising meal, quite unsuited to an ailing child. In the evening he had supper, and immediately afterwards was put to bed and left by himself till nine the next morning. Except at meal-times, he was entirely alone.

Gomin's first benefaction was to get permission for Louis to have a light during the long lonely nights, when heretofore the poor boy had often suffered agonies of terror in the dark. For this Louis was very grateful, and gradually he grew to trust Gomin, perhaps even to talk to him.

The boy was, however, almost always silent, particularly with strangers. This was partly from fear, no doubt, and partly from a dull, apathetic amazement that any one should be taking the trouble to treat him kindly.

Gomin, after a time, was able to arrange that he should spend now and then several hours at a time with the boy in efforts to rouse and entertain him. Evidently the good man was successful, for we hear of Louis's reading books which Gomin gave him, and of his even playing cards with his guardian, the latter always arranging the game in such a way that the poor lad might win. He also delighted the boy by gaining permission to take him for a change into another room of the Temple. This small favour was to the long-imprisoned child something almost incredibly delightful, and his pleasure when he was taken into the council-room and put in a chair near the window must have been pitiful to witness.

Meantime, while Louis XVII. in the Temple was being humanised by his guardian, Paris outside was spending much time in discussing him and his fate.

Not long after Laurent's arrival, it had been urged in the Convention that the "offspring of the tyrant" should be exiled, and France thereby delivered from "a constant cause of uneasiness."

A few months later this banishment was urged again.

"I demand," said one of the deputies, in the doubtful metaphor which often accompanies patriotism, "that measures be taken to purge the soil of freedom from the only trace of royalty which remains in it."

On the 22nd January 1795—that is, two years and a day after Louis XVI.'s death—Cambacérès delivered a well-reasoned opinion as to the treatment which France should give to the dead King's son. Cambacérès opposed the banishment.

"An enemy," said he, "is much less dangerous while he is in your power than after he has passed into the hands of those who uphold his cause.

"There is little danger in keeping captive the individuals of the Capet family; there is much in exiling them. The exiling of tyrants has almost always prepared the way for their re-establishment, and if Rome had kept the Tarquins in her power, she would never have needed to fight them."

A discussion followed this speech, in which one deputy made a suggestion which was even then looked upon as brutal. He proposed another and a surer way of ridding France of the last of the Capets.

And yet it is to-day difficult to understand why, in the midst of the murdering frenzy which held Paris for so long, this child so closely bound to the loathed cause was allowed to live. We cannot but share the feeling of the deputy who exclaimed, amidst hisses, "Amongst so many useless crimes committed before the 9th Thermidor, I am astonished that we spared the relics of this impure race."

But while the Convention was disputing what should be done with Louis XVII., higher forces had taken the matter into their own hands. His condition was growing day by day more alarming. It was plain that he was seriously ill.

He suffered from attacks of fever. He grew physically even more apathetic, and could not be kept away from the fire. His guards used to coax him up to the top of the tower to take the air, but no sooner did he reach the leads than he complained of being unable to walk, and asked to go downstairs again. The swellings at his joints, particularly his knees, from which he had suffered since the ordeal of his solitary imprisonment, grew worse.

All this frightened his guards, and the authorities also when they learned of it. Immediately the Commune sent three commissioners to investigate matters, and to find out how serious the little Capet's illness really was.

These commissioners included Harmand, who has left a record of the visit—a document full of interest, both for the account it gives of the prisoner's condition and also for the somewhat humorous light it throws on the character of the author.

Harmand, publishing this account years afterwards, when the Bourbons had come into their kingdom again, assumes throughout a tone of deepest sympathy and veneration for the unfortunate royal child, and represents himself as having addressed the boy in such respectful language as would probably have compromised and utterly ruined the good man had he really used it in 1794. The fact is, according to the testimony of Gomin, that Harmand said hardly anything at all, and that all the questions which he afterwards wrapped up in sugared language and put into his own mouth really came from one of the other commissioners.

As far, therefore, as his report deals with his own conversational efforts it has little value, but we have no reason to suppose that in the more important matter of describing Louis's condition and surroundings, it is anything but quite truthful and worthy of our attention.

After telling, rather melodramatically, how "the horrible bolts creaked," Harmand continues with a description of Louis XVII., in whose presence

he and his associates found themselves when the door opened :—

“The Prince was seated in front of a little square table, on which were spread out a great number of playing cards, some of which were bent into the shape of boxes and chests, others built up into castles. He was busy with his cards when we entered, and did not interrupt his game.

“He was dressed in a new sailor suit of slate-coloured cloth. His head was uncovered. His room was clean and well lighted. . . . I went towards the Prince, but our movements seemed to make not the slightest impression on him.”

Harmand then gives an outline of “a little harangue” which he delivered to the boy. Louis looked at him fixedly, without changing his position. He listened with every appearance of the greatest attention, but answered not a word.

Nothing discouraged, Harmand harangued again.

““I have perhaps explained myself badly, or it is possible that you, sir, have not heard what I said. But I have the honour to ask you if you wish for a horse, a dog, birds, playthings of any sort whatsoever, one or more companions of your own age whom we will present to you before installing them near you? Would you

like at this moment to go down into the garden or to climb up to the towers? Do you care for some sweets? Some cakes? . . .’

“Still the same fixed look, the same attention, the same silence.”

During the whole length of the visit, Louis never spoke. This fact indicates to some who do not believe that Louis XVII. died in the Temple, that the child Harmand saw was not Louis but a deaf-mute, and is indeed one of the important points in the countless discussions which have since taken place about the mystery of the Temple.

Before going away, Harmand assures us that the commissioners gave orders that “the execrable state of things,” such as bad food, should be changed in the future. Nothing, however, was altered, and there was not even a doctor sent to attend the sick child.

At the end of March, Laurent, at his own request, was relieved from his duties at the Temple, and two days later a new guardian came to supply his place. The new-comer was Lasne, to whom in future the care of the child prisoner was entrusted, Gomin restricting his attention more particularly to Madame Royale.

Lasne, like the two men he succeeded, was a person of much gentleness and amiability. He treated the boy with every consideration. Says





THACKERAY'S MYSTERIOUS PORTRAIT

*This picture, once a favorite possession of W. M. Thackeray's, is supposed to be that of the Dauphine.  
It is reproduced by kind permission of Lady Recluse, who owns it.*

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Madame de Tourzel, who knew him at a later period, "Lasne was a frank soldier and a man without ambition." Besides being a soldier—he had been a member of the National Guard and had been wounded while defending the Queen's apartments on the 20th June—Lasne had also worked as a house-painter.

It was while soldiering that Lasne had seen Louis several years before, when the happy little Dauphin used to play in his miniature garden on the banks of the Seine. Later on—according to the story subsequently told by Lasne, which is implicitly believed by those who hold that the Dauphin died in the Temple—he and the King became firm friends, and Louis, when he became accustomed to his new friend's martial appearance, gave him more of his confidence than he had given to any one else since he left Marie-Antoinette's side. The soldier and his prisoner used to exchange many reminiscences about those fine days. It made the boy particularly happy to listen to recollections of his old regiment, the Royal-Dauphin.

"Its manœuvres used to be splendid," said Lasne.

The boy's face broke out into a delighted smile. "Did you see me with my sword?" he asked; and there is no doubt that these

moments of reminiscence were the happiest Louis had known for almost two years.

Under Lasne's charge, the boy was left much less often in solitude. Only at night was he left for long alone. During the day Lasne spent much time in his room, or else took the child up to the top of the tower to be in the air. Louis, already very feeble and somewhat lame, walked only with difficulty and leaning against Lasne's arm.

As the spring of 1795 advanced, Louis XVII.'s condition grew steadily and rapidly worse. Lasne and Gomin became more and more alarmed, as is shown by the successive reports which they prepared on the subject day by day.

"The little Capet is indisposed"—so reads the first.

Then : "The little Capet is dangerously ill."

And finally, on the third day : "We fear for his life."

Till now no doctor had attended the child, but on May 6, when this third report was received, the authorities sent to the Temple, Desault, a physician of considerable prominence.

Desault was greatly alarmed at the King's state. It was plain that he regarded the case as almost hopeless. He prescribed, nevertheless, some medicine to be taken every half-hour, and

an external application to the swellings at the boy's joints.

To this first treatment the boy objected bitterly. Whether it was from fear of poisoning or from a dislike of the physic, or from a natural youthful antipathy to doses, Louis obstinately refused to take his medicine. Finally, however, after many scenes and after the good-hearted Lasne had tasted it before him, Louis yielded, and thereafter followed Desault's bidding very tractably.

The child's strength grew less every day. He did not suffer much, but sank under an illness which he had no force to combat. He had very little pain.

Desault was quite hopeless, and yet, serious as was his patient's condition, he was destined to outlive the doctor.

At the end of May he visited the boy for the last time. As he left the Temple one of the commissioners said to him, "He is as good as dead, is he not?"

The doctor nodded and said he feared so. On the 1st June, Desault himself was dead. At the time, as well as later, his sudden death aroused much suspicion, and it was said he had for some reason been poisoned. However this may have been, we come here again to another incident of some importance in considering the Temple mystery.

For six days, on account of Desault's death, Louis was left quite without medical care. On June 5 a successor to the dead physician was appointed, somewhat tardily, in the shape of Palletan, and that same day he came to the Temple.

No sooner did this new doctor see what condition the boy was in, than he demanded that some one else should immediately be sent to help him to take care of the child. While he was talking in the sick-room and giving directions for Louis's treatment, the boy beckoned him to the side of his bed.

"Do not talk so loud," he said. "I am afraid my sister will hear you, and I should be sorry to have her know I was ill. It would trouble her very much."

Palletan took it upon himself to have the patient moved into another room whose windows looked out on to the garden, and where the June sun shining in gave the boy much pleasure.

Two days later Dumangin, the consulting physician for whom Palletan had asked, came to the Temple, and like the two other doctors, regarded Louis's illness as very alarming. Both he and Palletan despatched to the authorities a pressing demand that a sick-nurse should be sent to take care of the King, for the iron rules of the prison still forced the guards to leave

this dying child quite alone all night, from nine in the evening until eight in the morning.

After the usual delay, this demand was granted on the 8th June. But it was then too late.

On June 7 the child fainted when the lotion was rubbed on the swellings on his knees and wrists, and for a moment Lasne feared he would never regain consciousness.

In the evening, however, he seemed better. His eyes brightened, his voice grew stronger. But his mind wandered, and when they brought him his supper at eight o'clock, he spoke incoherently of his mother.

That night, as always, he was left alone.

Next morning, the 8th June 1795, Palletan visited him early, and Dumangin came at eleven o'clock. They found the child very feeble. He had hallucinations and fancied he heard music.

"Amongst all the voices I recognise my mother's," said he.

His breath came slowly, his eyes wandered. The end seemed very close.

Gomin, in alarm, hurried to the Convention to report his desperate condition. While he was gone the child died, his head resting against Lasne's shoulder, and in his ears the dream-music.

## CHAPTER XV

### BUT DID HE DIE?

THE conventional phrase, "*Le roi est mort : vive le roi !*" was true in a new sense in the case of the child of the Temple. It is more than a hundred years since the death of Louis XVII. was announced. During the century men have died and others have given up their lives and their fortunes in vain effort to find out what happened to this young king, to learn whether he died on the 8th June 1795, or whether he escaped and lived—perhaps even a sadder creature than the prisoner of the Temple—a cheated, nameless martyr. Louis XVII., alive, was never half so vital a personage as Louis XVII. after—officially—he was dead. Never did an existence so short give cause for so many conjectures and theories, so many quarrels and discussions and impostures.

Barely was the boy in the Temple dead when it was rumoured about Europe that he had been poisoned by his guards. Poison—so it was said—had been given to him "in a dish of spinach." Only seven days after the death, there appeared



a pamphlet, called *Question importante sur la Mort de Louis XVII.*, which was the first contribution to this now tremendous library about the Louis XVII. mystery, and in which these suspicions were definitely advanced. All this talk, though quite unfounded, aroused, as might be supposed, a great sensation.

Soon, however, the rumour changed. There was no longer much talk of poisoning. It was whispered that Louis had escaped, that the child who died was not the King, but merely some poor moribund creature stolen from the hospitals. Here was a sensation indeed!

"What had happened to the little King? Had he escaped? Where was he now?"—It was the favourite topic of the clubs and the tea-tables, the mystery of the hour.

In the *European Magazine* for December 1799 is a little article that shows how England felt towards this royal scandal, an article that, with its old-fashioned phrasing, its multitude of capitals and long-tailed D's, its yellow leaves and its bad grammar, carries us back more surely than do all the painstaking historians to the times of the Dauphin and to the days when his mysterious fate was one of the living interests of the moment. What the old magazine says is here quoted almost as it stands :—

"A most extraordinary rumour which has

been stated in a Morning Print, has occupied the public conversation. We give the article without pretending to any knowledge, or offering an opinion on the subject.

“Private letters, which have been received by various persons of the first consideration amongst the French Emigrants, Nobility and others, agree in the general statement of an unaccountable rumour. It is generally reported, say their letters, that the unfortunate Louis XVII., supposed to have expired in the Temple upon the 9th of June 1795, is still alive. The Triumvir Sièyes is assigned both as the author of the report and the evidence of the fact. It was he who is said to have subtracted the devoted Prince from the prison of the National Convention. He procured a child of a corresponding age from the hospital of the Hôtel Dieu, incurably afflicted with the Scrofula, the pretended disease of the young King, and admitted this unfortunate child into the Temple, and exposed the body disfigured with ulcers and operations instead of the Royal victim.

“According to this relation, Louis XVII. exists —WHERE he exists can only be known to those who of all mankind are alone acquainted with the fact of his existence; and when and how he shall appear depends upon the makers of

this important secret. It is easy to apprehend the utility which the arch-villain Sièyes may promise himself to reap from this story, if it were to find credit; and the power he may have already derived, and be able to exert, and the ascendancy he may have attained, from the secret card he has so long held unplayed in the game of Revolutions.

“It is to be remembered that a few days previous to the King’s death, or at least the exposition of the body in the Temple, the famous Surgeon DESAULT expired SUDDENLY. Whoever looks back at the public discussions of that period in France will observe the stress laid upon this COINCIDENCE. It was *then* inferred he would not suffer his patient to be poisoned. But it was also rumoured, on no mean authority, that he denied this patient to be the Royal infant it was pretended he was. Moreover, it is to be remembered that this unhappy child, the prisoner of his assassins in the Temple, the bulletin, or daily account, of whose declining health was regularly published to the world, perished in June 1795 in his dungeon, of a scrofulous disease, according to the facts submitted to the then Usurpers of France and published by their authority. It is to be remembered that all Europe, with one common cry, burst forth in the denial that this interesting

child had a scrofulous disease. Neither the House of Bourbon, nor that of Austria, were afflicted with that malady ; the babe could not have contracted it. When this bulletin arrived in England, with the concomitant report that the young sufferer had been poisoned by the Committee of Safety, some very extraordinary circumstances occurred or transpired.

“All the world believed the young King to have been murdered. The British Cabinet, with no other opinion, ordered the bulletin to be examined by a physician of the very first reputation. This gentleman reported to the King’s Council that the young King could not have died of the cause assigned in the bulletin. The case was fictitious, and the consequence would not have followed from the premises, even if they had been true.”

Here, then, are set forth two suspicious circumstances in connection with the child’s death.

Desault, sent to prescribe for him, died himself before his patient—died by so sudden and strange an illness that many people, including his widow, believed he had been poisoned because, as a man of upright character, he refused to lend himself to some irregular practice at the Temple. To this suspicion, however, may be raised the objection that if those in

authority had wished to keep secret the fact that the imprisoned invalid was not the Dauphin, they would naturally have chosen a doctor who did not know the Prince rather than one who, like Desault, knew him well.

But the other circumstance, that of the disease from which the child was said to have died, is more seriously suspicious. In the report of the autopsy held the day after the death, the doctors stated officially that the body, "which the commissioners told us was that of the defunct Louis Capet's son," had met its death from "a scrofulous affection of long standing." This official report has been the cause of many disputes.

In the first place, the ambiguity with which it was worded, and by which the doctors disclaimed all responsibility in pronouncing on the identity of the corpse, seems a striking circumstance in a case where the identity of the body was so important. Even though this ambiguity was, as M. Chantelauze says, the customary formula in such cases, it seems extraordinary that the doctors, in dealing with so important a case, should deliberately have laid themselves open to suspicion. A more important point is that the illness imputed to the Dauphin is said to have been one from which, under the circumstances, he could not

have died. The child of the Temple died from an hereditary malady which it is argued the son of Louis and Marie-Antoinette could not have inherited. Such was the opinion of the nameless physician quoted in the *European Magazine*; such, stated most definitely only a few years ago, was the opinion of Dr. Cabanès. Here then we have a suspicious fact undoubtedly worth considering. There are many others.

Some of the other irregularities are so insignificant that, considered singly, they would be of little importance; but it must be remembered that each of them bears upon a case already suspicious. Taken altogether, it must be admitted that the circumstances of the case are such as to shake violently our faith in the conventional story of the Dauphin's death. In considering a few of the more striking of these irregularities, we are met in the first place by the fact that the official report of the child's death was not drawn up for four days after his death, though the regulations of the period demanded this formality should be carried out at once. How is this to be accounted for? Why was it signed by Lasne, the last guardian to take charge of the Dauphin, rather than by Gomin? And why—this is indeed striking—did not Madame Royale have a chance to bear witness to her brother's death, when she, a

prisoner under the same roof, could have killed all these suspicions before they were born by a glance at the little corpse and a stroke of the pen? It would seem almost as if an effort had been made to render this report of the death as unconvincing as possible.

About the child's burial there is also much that is uncertain. At least four places are mentioned as having been his grave, and it has never been ascertained beyond possibility of doubt what was the exact spot where the Dauphin, or pseudo-Dauphin, was laid. A still further peculiar circumstance, and one which will be spoken of later, was the strange behaviour of Madame Royale and the rest of the royal family, who by their indifference to supposed relics of the child, and in other ways, suggested that they themselves did not believe Louis XVII. had died in the Temple.

The fact remains that there are in connection with the official ending of Louis XVII.'s career a dozen suspicious details, no one of which is of prime importance, but all of which considered together cannot but raise a serious doubt that the King died in the Temple, particularly in view of the weighty reasons why his escape might have been desired not only by royalists but by some of the republicans as well. To oppose to the suspicion that the King escaped

and another child died in his place and under his name, we have only the extremely circumstantial accounts furnished by Gomin and Lasne of the child's last days in the Temple—accounts which, if they be true, prove conclusively the dying boy was indeed Louis XVII. Gomin and Lasne, however, did not leave their reputations as witnesses entirely spotless.

Lasne, for example, during an official examination in 1834, stated that he had talked with the prisoner "every day," and "never except on serious and grave subjects." Only three years later he stated, again officially, that the child "never broke silence" except on one single occasion. "This," said Lasne, "was the only remark I ever heard him make in all the time I spent at his side." Gomin is but little more reliable, and it is because of these inconsistencies and contradictions that we cannot receive unquestioningly the testimony of these men as to Louis XVII.'s death.

What were the reasons that made the Dauphin's escape desirable? In the first place, it was wished for, of course, by those ardent friends of Marie-Antoinette who, when the Queen died, turned their energies and their fortunes toward saving her son. Amongst this number stands out particularly the devoted Mrs. Atkyns, a former actress, whose quixotic attachment to the



Queen cost her many years of her life and some eighty thousand pounds of money. Her fruitless attempts to rescue the Dauphin have been ably described by M. Frédéric Barbey.<sup>1</sup> Such an ambition as hers was quite straightforward and easy to understand; she loved Marie-Antoinette and Marie-Antoinette's son; she wished to save the royal child from a painful and dangerous imprisonment. There clusters, however, about the Dauphin's possible escape a growth of intrigue far more complex and scandalous than could concern this generous woman's attempt to liberate an unhappy prince. This intrigue has been traced by M. Henri Provins in many interesting books.

On the official announcement of Louis XVII.'s death the Comte de Provence, though still an *émigré*, promptly proclaimed himself King of France. Even to the least cynical, it would be impossible to believe that this scheming, clever, and unscrupulous man was not delighted

<sup>1</sup> A tablet has lately been erected in Ketteringham to commemorate the bravery of this devoted woman. The inscription reads: "In memory of CHARLOTTE, daughter of Robert Walpole and wife of Edward Atkyns, Esq., of Ketteringham. She was born 1758 and died at Paris 1836, where she lies in an unknown grave. This tablet was erected in 1907 by a few who sympathised with her wish to rest in this church. She was the friend of MARIE-ANTOINETTE, and made several brave attempts to rescue her from prison, and after that Queen's death strove to save the Dauphin of France."

at an opportunity to lift the crown off the head of his little nephew, even at the expense of the boy's life. The Comte de Provence—or rather Louis XVIII.—had always plotted against his elder brother and his elder brother's family. He was jealous of Louis XVI., he disliked Marie-Antoinette, and for the Dauphin, but for whom he would have been heir to the throne of France, he had a passionate hatred.

Add to this jealousy and hatred the manœuvres of a self-seeking man and the soft-heartedness of a charming woman, and there are ready materials for a romantic intrigue of the first water. The self-seeker was General Barras, the woman his supposed mistress, Josephine de Beauharnais, afterwards Napoleon's Empress. Josephine was sorry for the poor little imprisoned Prince and influenced Barras in his favour. Something else influenced Barras far more. Suppose—so thought the General—the Dauphin should be allowed to escape, while, by a secret substitution, a moribund child took his place and finally died under the name of Louis XVII. Would Barras not then have gained a claim which would be of immeasurable value to him in the not unlikely event of a Bourbon restoration? The Comte de Provence, there is no doubt, would lend himself to the fraud of killing his nephew officially while really keeping him

alive. Barras, on the other hand, would hold the new king, Louis XVIII., in the hollow of his hand, would be able to dangle threateningly over the royal head his little cheated nephew, to whisper in the royal ear, "Your throne is not your own, and I know where is the boy from whom you have stolen it"—to make himself, in short, the master of the King of France. It was certainly an alluring prospect, and if Barras—unforeseeing of the great Napoleon who would upset his pretty scheme—viewed it with approval, who can wonder?

Poor little Louis XVII. was a superfluity. He was more than that—this Prince on whose baby words courtiers had used to hang entranced but three years ago. He was a positive inconvenience. Not only would the Comte de Provence have been glad to have him removed. Even the royalist party, to a large extent, would have been relieved to be rid of him. This little helpless King, a prisoner in the hands of their enemies, a creature who could not be their leader for many years, perhaps never could—for they were told he had been almost dehumanised by ill-treatment—was only an embarrassing figure-head for their cause. The Comte de Provence, on the contrary, was adult and clever. It is no wonder that the greater part of the royalists preferred him to their pitiful little King.

There are therefore many indications that the Dauphin's escape or suppression was desired. There are as many stories of how the escape or suppression was brought about. What really happened inside the Temple during the two years that followed the Dauphin's removal from his mother no one can say. We have on the one hand the story told by conventional history—Simon, the six months' solitary confinement, the death of the little Prince on June 8, 1795. On the other hand, there are a score of different stories recounting how the boy was saved from the Temple and another child introduced into his prison to die in his name. Where the truth lies none can know. We can only balance possibilities and then say, "This, or that, seems most likely."

The many stories of the escape fall under two main heads, that told by Naundorff, the most plausible of all those who afterwards called themselves Louis XVII., and that told by his most important rival, the Baron de Richemont. Naundorff's story is the more complicated, and if a pure fabrication, does great credit to the ingenuity of its inventor. To tell it we must return to that period when the Dauphin, released from his solitary confinement, found himself, after the 9th Thermidor, again amongst human beings. Barras was victorious; soft-hearted Josephine,

so we are told, pleaded for the unhappy child. The Comte de Provence would be glad to have his troublesome little nephew removed. Barras saw a chance to gain much—Josephine's favour, Louis XVIII.'s gratitude, an increase of his own self-esteem that he had saved the boy from misery, probably from death—and to lose nothing, providing, of course, he acted discreetly.

So the Dauphin, helpless piece in this game of king and general and embryonic empress, was rescued. This is how it was brought about—I tell it in almost the same words Naundorff himself used: It was about a year before the death of the supposed Louis XVII. The boy's friends decided—since it seemed impossible to get him away from the tower—to conceal him in it and to make his persecutors believe he had escaped.

One day these friends—"my protectors" Naundorff calls them, meaning, no doubt, some men from the *personnel* of the Temple guards—gave him a dose of opium, under the influence of which he soon fell half asleep. In this state he saw a child, a little boy that had been smuggled into the Temple inside a basket, placed in his bed. He, the Dauphin, was meantime put into the basket. As if in a dream, he noticed that this second child was merely a wooden figure

with a face made to resemble his own. Then he fell asleep.

When he awoke he found himself in a large room, which was strange to him. It was the fourth storey of the Temple tower. It was a sort of lumber-room, and was crowded with old furniture, which had been shoved aside to leave a space for him. It communicated with a closet in the turret, where his food was placed. All other approach was barricaded, and those who visited him had to come crawling on all fours. Before he was drugged he had been told he must bear "all imaginable sufferings without complaining," for a single imprudence would bring destruction not only to him but to his benefactors as well. The boy obeyed. No doubt it was natural to him to bear privations calmly. He was well used to them, poor lad.

His friends, meantime, the better to deceive the government, sent out from Paris a child who was to travel towards Strasbourg as one trying to escape, and thus to give the idea that he was the rescued Dauphin—a manœuvre which was repeated about a year later with great success. The government on their part, to conceal the loss of that child, also practised a deception. They replaced the wooden doll by a boy of the Dauphin's age, who, being deaf and dumb, could not betray the fraud. Thus while the Dauphin

was really in the garret, and while his friends were pretending he was on his way to Strasbourg, the government was pretending he was still in his cell as usual. It was a complex situation, and still greater complications were soon to follow.

Orders were given that none who had previously known the Dauphin should be admitted to the imprisoned mute. Notwithstanding, suspicion gradually got about that the real Dauphin was no longer there. The government was alarmed. It was decided the mock Dauphin must die. Harmful matters were mixed with his food to make him ill, and in order to avert the just suspicion that he was being poisoned, Desault was called in, not to cure him, but to counterfeit humanity. Desault soon perceived that some sort of poison had been given him, and evidently declined to associate himself with the crime. The would-be murderers saw themselves foiled, and were forced to abandon the idea of poisoning the mute. A second substitution was made. A rickety child from one of the hospitals of Paris was introduced to play Dauphin. The mute was hidden away in another part of the Temple. Desault, meantime, they poisoned to prevent his betrayal of them.

On the 8th June the child from the hospital obligingly died, and after the formalities of a post-mortem examination, his body was put in

a coffin to await burial. The moment had come for still another substitution. This time it was the turn of the real Dauphin, who had all these months lain concealed in his lumber-room. His friends came to him and drugged him with a second dose of opium. All unconscious, he was placed secretly in the coffin. The dead boy was carried off to the garret. Then, in his gruesome hiding-place, the real Dauphin was taken away from the Temple. On the way to the burial-ground, the Prince still sleeping, he was removed from the coffin and was hidden in the bottom of the carriage. The coffin was filled with rubbish to give it weight and was buried. The Dauphin, safe in the hands of his friends, was free.

Such was Naundorff's account of how the Dauphin escaped. Many have believed it, though merely to understand it in all its intricacies of substituted children and mock-Dauphins requires a head far clearer than the ordinary.

Richemont's story of the escape, which in its main lines resembles those of most of the other self-styled Louis XVII.s, is far simpler. It will be remembered that in the days of the Restoration, when Louis XVIII. was King, la Simon, a patient at the Hospital for Incurables, declared repeatedly that her "little darling was not dead," but that, thanks to her help, he had escaped and might one day come into his own



again. Her words created at the time a great sensation. Curious folk in high positions visited her at her hospital. She was taken before the police to be questioned, and finally, in 1819, she died, still affirming her story of the Dauphin's escape. It seems likely that, whatever may have been the facts, this old woman believed she was telling the truth.

How did la Simon manage to save her "little darling"? The old woman herself was not inclined to give details on this point. This, however, if her story is to be accepted, appears to have been what happened. It was the 19th January 1794; the Simons—for some reason never fully made clear—were about to leave their profitable position at the Temple. At this moment a deaf-mute of the Dauphin's age was introduced surreptitiously into his prison. The Dauphin, hidden in a package of linen or in some other fashion, was smuggled away. To this escape the Simons, won over by a bribe, lent their aid. Before their departure the guards who succeeded them received, all unsuspecting, the mute mock-Dauphin from their hands, and gave in return an official receipt. Picture the chagrin, the terror of these unfortunate dupes, when a little later they realised how they had been cheated, and that instead of precious Louis XVII. they held prisoner a wretched deaf and dumb

boy. Did they confess how they had been fooled, there is no doubt they would, in those merciless times, pay for their folly with their heads; yet how could they hope to keep their mistake secret? There was only one way, and that was to hide the damning evidence of their gullibility. That day the child-prisoner was walled up alive in his cell, and thenceforth no one saw him or talked with him until the 9th Thermidor, six months later.

This story has two points of strength. It suggests, in the first place, a reason why the Simons might have desired to leave so excellently paid a post as that they enjoyed at the Temple. It also, and this is more important, explains the horrid brutality that condemned, with apparently causeless cruelty, an eight-year-old child to months of silence and absolute neglect. For these reasons, judged simply on its merits, the tale of la Simon gives a more convincing account of the escape than that given by Naundorff, which, with its series of substituted mock-Dauphins and its real Dauphin spending nearly a year alone in a lumber-room, makes rather large demands on our credulity.

It is not impossible, however, that both stories, Richemont's and Naundorff's, were told in good faith. It may be that the Dauphin really escaped with the help of la Simon, and that, a year later,

other friends, ignorant of his rescue (for it is not to be supposed his saviours would have advertised their success), set themselves to save this pseudo-prince whom they supposed to be their actual king, and cheated, just as the guards had been, by the deaf-mute's resemblance to Louis XVII., carried off the child to the garret and substituted for him another boy. In this case we come to a state of affairs that suggests the imbroglíos of musical comedy, and with the real Dauphin in freedom with his friends we behold three mock-Dauphins in the Temple. There is, in the first place, the child whom the Simons left to fill Louis XVII.'s place, and who was subsequently hidden in the lumber-room by those friends who thought they saw in him the rightful King of France. Then there is the second mute introduced by the government to mask the loss of the first, and later removed to a hiding-place in favour of the dying child from the hospital. Finally, we have as a third pseudo-Dauphin under one roof this moribund boy who, on June 8, 1795, died under the name of Louis XVII. Though absurd enough, all this is not absolutely impossible.

We have not, however, exhausted the possible methods which may have been employed to bring about the Dauphin's departure from the Temple. We have been told how he was carried out in

a coffin, and how he left his prison in a basket of linen or a hollow toy horse. We have yet to hear how he left it in Simon's arms, a corpse. This last theory has lately been advanced by M. Joseph Turquan, who believes that in January 1794, when the Simons left the Temple, the cobbler at the instigation of his superiors murdered the Dauphin by strangling him, and buried his body in quicklime in the ditch about the Temple. Some years later the skeleton of a child was dug up in the ditch, and on this rather small foundation M. Turquan has built up his grim theory. Though ingenious, it is for several reasons not convincing, the principal objection to it being the subsequent behaviour of la Simon.

This woman could not have failed to know it if her husband had murdered the Dauphin. Conditions of life at the Temple were not such that the cobbler could have kept his vile secret. Supposing, then, that la Simon knew of the murder, was after a fashion an accomplice, does it seem likely that she would have been foolish enough deliberately to attract attention to her guilty self years after, when the family of the murdered child occupied the throne and she was a helpless widow, a charity patient in a hospital? Is it not preposterous to suppose that she would gratuitously have provoked an investi-

gation which must have proved fatal to her? "My little darling is not dead!"—these could never have been the words of a murderess.

Whatever may have happened to the Dauphin during those two years of mystery, it is certain, at any rate, that he was not strangled by Simon. Unfortunately, it is not so easy to say what did happen to the child. Never before nor since has any one question had so many answers. Yet if it is difficult to determine amongst such a mass of fiction and possible truth how the Dauphin did escape, if he escaped at all, it is many times harder to find out what happened to him afterwards.

During the years that followed 1795 some forty persons, some impostors, some lunatics, and some few genuinely convinced of their rights, either pretended to be the Dauphin or possessed friends who made these pretensions for them. The careers of this extraordinary body of men have furnished for more than a century figure-heads to the fanatical, romance for the story-teller, and a very pleasant subject of consideration to the cynic.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE FORTY DAUPHINS

NEVER has a prince disappeared in romantic circumstances but there have sprung up like mushrooms in the night a crowd of impostors, a mass of legends. Historic scandal has put many faces behind the Iron Mask and exercised an equal inventiveness in a hundred less famous instances. The case of the Dauphin, however, is unique in the appeal it has made to the ingenuity of adventurers. Forty men have called themselves Louis XVII. There was hardly a province in France that had not its particular false-Dauphin. America had two or three. There was one in England who discussed his pretensions publicly with the *Times*. In short, in the years of the Bourbon restoration and of Louis-Philippe, one might scarce walk abroad without jostling some man who called himself Louis XVII.

One reason may be found to explain this absurd little army, a reason which will, in some cases, excuse from the charge of wilful deceit

those who formed part of it. It must be remembered that France after the Revolution was a country turned upside down. The homeless and the fatherless were everywhere, and the land was full of lost children, many of them of noble rank, who grew up often without name or definite recollection of who they were. What more natural than that some of these poor waifs, remembering vaguely the days when they were petted noble children, should, as they grew older, fancy themselves to be the lost king, and should, by brooding over their fancy, come at last to the unalterable belief that it was true?

A circumstance which to the unreflecting was particularly astonishing was the incontestable resemblance which many of these self-styled Dauphins bore to the royal house, indeed some of them based their entire pretensions on this bald fact. Yet the resemblance was natural enough when we recall the scandalous private lives of Louis XIV. and his successor. France held many men of all ranks who, though they had no right to the Bourbon name, came very fairly by the Bourbon nose. The sins of the fathers were visited on the children, and the grandsons of Louis XV. and his mistresses grew up to claim the crown of the grandson of Louis XV. and his wife. The wicked old king

who bequeathed to France the Reign of Terror was also responsible for a good share of the forty pretenders who demanded to wear the crown.

The first of these mock-Dauphins, curiously enough, was a pretender despite himself, and also—another strange circumstance—he commenced his career as a pseudo-Louis XVII. even before the real, or rather the official, Louis XVII. died.

It will be remembered that in one of the stories of the escape from the Temple there was mention of how a child was sent out of Paris to be driven away with ostentatious speed and secrecy, so as to lay a false scent and to divert attention from the escape of the real Prince. As was expected and hoped, this child was indeed mistaken for the Dauphin, only the mistake was somewhat more serious than had been intended. The child was Morin de Guérivière, and according to his own story he was, on June 7, 1795 (the day before the death in the Temple), put into a carriage and driven away from Paris by an agent of the Prince de Condé, who all along the road behaved in such a fashion as to attract as much attention as possible. Quantities of people were deceived and took Morin for the escaping King. In fact, he was even arrested. Much



credit is due to him that in after years he did not attempt to play again the royal rôle he had carried off so successfully in childhood.

It is unnecessary to attempt to give an account of each of the two-score self-styled Dauphins who, through a period of eighty years, claimed for themselves the name of Louis XVII. Many of these men contented themselves with modeling their procedure and the stories they told directly on the procedure and stories of some other pretender, so that they never emerged from the obscurity of their own little band of followers, and indeed never deserved to. It is with the more prominent and ingenious of the *soi-disant* Dauphins that we must concern ourselves, with such men as Hervegault and Mathurin Bruneau, with Richemont and Naundorff and the Iroquois chief, those brighter stars in the strange constellation that called itself Louis XVII.

Jean-Marie Hervegault was the first to attract real notice. The son of a tailor of Saint-Lô, Hervegault was handsome, attractive, imaginative, and gifted with ambitions that soared high above the parental thimble. In the autumn of 1796 he left his home to seek adventures, and before very long had embarked on them in a characteristic fashion by pretending to be a youth of lofty rank. His method was to travel

about the country under different pseudonyms and disguises, sometimes indeed dressed as a girl. His pseudonyms he shifted with amazing rapidity. At one time he called himself a scion of a noble Belgian house, at another he pretended to be the son of the Prince of Monaco. Finally, his ideas growing gradually more and more lofty, he claimed to be the son of Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette. He rapidly made converts, who, looking at the beautiful face of the tailor's son and admiring his distinguished manners, exclaimed, "It is only necessary to look at him to see who he is!"

Presently Hervegault met with a set-back and was imprisoned in Normandy for two years. Emerging, he found his dupes clustering about him, their "martyred Prince," with a fine enthusiasm and in great numbers. They treated him with the highest respect and honour, and formed for him a sort of little court, with favourites and courtesans. Every dupe saw in himself a future minister of France or a duchess in embryo, and Hervegault, recently graduated from needle and beeswax, was lapped in luxury and wrapped in flattery and soft words. It was to this miniature court of his that Hervegault told one day the story of his supposed escape from the Temple and of his subsequent career. From this story it may plainly be seen that he was not only

an impostor, but an ignorant one as well. The first part of his autobiography was made up almost point by point from a popular novel by Regnault-Warin called *Le Cimetière de la Madeleine*, in which the author had recounted how the Dauphin escaped from prison and what became of him.

Hervegault's faithful court, however, were quite convinced by his account of how he had escaped from prison in a basket of linen, and had been carried off by the royalists to La Vendée, and of how the son of the tailor Hervegault had been purchased for 200,000 livres to take his place at the Temple. Leaving La Vendée, said he, he had visited England, and had been received by the King, who had given him an apartment in his palace and admitted him to the royal brotherhood. Later during his all-embracing travels he had visited Portugal, where it had been arranged that he should marry the sister of the Queen. With all this nonsense his followers were delighted, and the comedy was continued with renewed enthusiasm.

His court formed a project to marry him to an illegitimate granddaughter of Louis XV., as some one "worthy of his blood." Hervegault, though feeling himself still pledged in a way to the sister of the Portuguese Queen, was at last persuaded to agree to the plan; but before

it was carried out his star had set, the authorities had fallen upon this skilful impostor, and his sensational trial had begun. He was finally condemned to four years' imprisonment, and on leaving his prison he found his followers dispersed. Bravely he set about to make new dupes, but his luck was gone, and his career sank into obscurity. It is said that he died in 1812, proclaiming himself to the end to be the son of Louis XVI. None doubts to-day, however, that he originated in the tailor's shop at Saint-Lô.

Mathurin Bruneau stood next to Hervegault chronologically amongst the more important pretenders, and also, as it happened, resembled him rather closely in the details of his career. Where Hervegault, however, depended for his success on personal charm and beauty and on a distinction of manner with which he had by some freak been graced, Bruneau's only equipment was an extreme ugliness and coarseness of appearance and manner, combined with a phenomenal impudence. To him certainly belongs the dubious distinction—though it seems never to have been conferred upon him till now—of having been the most brazen impostor that ever disgraced the earth. It is not his cleverness that is striking, nor his ingenuity. It is the monumental effrontery that enabled him to stand before people who knew

he was not, and never could have been, Louis XVII., and to tell them over and over, "I am your King! I am the lost Dauphin!" until by very force of impudence he compelled them to believe the lie.

Bruneau was born in 1784, of even more lowly stock than the tailor's son, for his parents were labourers at Vezin in the department of Maine-et-Loire. When he was eleven, he left his home to go on an adventure-hunt, in which he was very promptly successful. He arrived one day, dusty and ill-clothed, at the house of a farmer and asked for food.

"Who are you?" said the farmer.

"I am *un petit de Vezin*—a child of Vezin," answered the boy.

It chanced that lately in the civil war the château of the seigneur, the Baron de Vezin, had been sacked and pillaged. With the characteristic luck of the born adventurer, little Mathurin, by the ambiguous wording of his reply, roused in the mind of the simple farmer the idea that he was, not a child from Vezin, but a child of Vezin, the unfortunate seigneur.

"What, are you the baron's son, the child of Vezin?" cried the farmer.

Like a flash the tired little scoundrel took in the situation, saw his chance, and in the space of an instant performed a bit of mental

gymnastics, and leapt from labourer's child to baron's son.

"Yes," said he sadly, and by the one word raised himself to a high place amongst the world's precocious children, taking rank along with the child saints and infant musicians as a novel prodigy—an eleven-year-old adventurer.

Forthwith the supposed noble refugee was established as inmate of a near-by château, where he was treated as an equal by the sympathetic mistress. His *gaucherie* was laid down to the effects of the fear and ill-treatment he had suffered, but soon his awkwardness wore off. Little Bruneau took to deception as a duckling to water. In a few days he was filling to perfection the rôle of persecuted baron's son, the aristocratic victim of civil wars. For a year this boy was able to play his part so well that of all the inmates of the château not a soul suspected him. It was a wonderful feat, and one which few adults suddenly transported from the coarsest poverty to noble surroundings could have equalled.

Unfortunately, however, though through no fault of his own, he was found out. The brother of the Baron de Vezin heard of his little pseudo-nephew, and arriving one day at the château, with a few decisive words tipped over in an instant little Mathurin's neatly packed apple-cart.

The boy was turned out, and for the next few years we know little of what happened to him.

At nineteen he became a sailor, deserted his ship at an American port, and for ten years wandered about the United States, gaining his living turn by turn as baker, stone-mason, and as servant in a boarding-house. Finally, in 1815, he returned to France, now calling himself no longer Bruneau, but Charles de Navarre. Presently, after some minor adventures, the idea came to him of pretending to be the Dauphin. After considerable rebuffing, for the young man had with characteristic impudence selected for himself a rôle for which he was quite unqualified, both because he neither looked the part, nor had the slightest idea of the Dauphin's history, he at last gathered some followers and also got himself imprisoned in Rouen.

It was then that all sorts of rumours began to be spread about concerning him: the Dauphin, it was said, was alive—he was in prison—there, in Rouen itself. People came to see him for themselves, and Bruneau, who had played so successfully at being the baron's son, was equally convincing in the part of long-lost Dauphin. Gifts and adoration were poured at the impostor's feet. He chose for himself two secretaries, who set themselves, with the help of the novel *Le Cimetière de la Madeleine*, to

writing memoirs for the Bruneau-Dauphin, and to composing proclamations to which Mathurin could not even sign his royal name.

Bruneau, in the meanwhile, employed himself in committing to memory long passages from books dealing with the imprisonment of the royal family, a subject of which he had been till then densely ignorant. He also attempted to approach the Dauphin's sister, now the Duchesse d'Angoulême, but his emissaries were unable to gain admittance to her. The public eye became more and more fixed on the impostor. He, meantime, played the King luxuriously in his prison—had a bath each day, ate fine food served splendidly, drank his coffee from a superb porcelain service, and took his liqueurs in noble crystals.

At last, however, luck, the great god of scoundrels, turned its face away from Bruneau. He was examined officially, and, forgetting some of his carefully learned pages, muddled his account of the Temple captivity. This certainly was a misfortune, but might have been repaired, had not, by an evil chance, the lady at whose château little Mathurin had played at being the baron's son appeared on the scene and recognised him. Bruneau still blustered, but confronted by some of his relatives, his imposture crumbled. Throughout his trial, con-



ducted in the midst of an immense crowd, this amazing rascal behaved outrageously. Nothing could move him from his assertion that he was Louis XVII. He insulted judges and witnesses right and left, and maintained to the very end his attitude of shameless insolence.

"He is Mathurin Bruneau," said the prosecutor.

The prisoner leapt to his feet furiously. "Learn that I am, as I always have been, Louis XVII., son of the unhappy Louis XVI., and that neither you nor yours can stop me," he cried. "Take my life, if you like! You have killed my father; you can easily kill me too!"

An attempt was made to recover some of the money which had been bestowed on him by his dupes.

"Oh, nonsense!" exclaimed Bruneau shrewdly. "You are here at a comedy. You'll not get your money back."

In the end he was condemned to pay a fine, and to seven years' imprisonment.

After his trial he became half-crazed, and died in prison in 1825, leaving behind him a reputation, unenviable no doubt, but none the less incontestable, of having been one of the most brazen-faced rascals that ever lived. Curiously enough, there were some persons, so it is said by M. de la Sicotière in his interesting

study of the pretenders, who believed Bruneau was still alive in 1844, a trader with the negroes in Cayenne. But the trader was evidently a mock Mathurin Bruneau, just as Bruneau had been a mock Louis XVII., and this counterfeiting of the counterfeit confers on the original impostor the highest mark of honour in the realm of rascals and adventurers.

Following the extraordinary career of the arch-adventurer Bruneau there was for several years a period of calm, during which no pretenders of importance advanced their claims. Then came one who differed somewhat from these obvious impostors, whose deliberate attempts to cheat the public have just been set forth. This new self-styled Dauphin, Augustus Meves, is more difficult to classify, and though there is no doubt he was an impostor, it is not clear whether he was wilfully so or whether he actually believed himself to be the lost king in whose name he masqueraded. One reason which points to his good faith is that his claims, though discussed privately at a much earlier date, were not advanced publicly until after his death. If this does not prove that Meves was an honest man, it shows at any rate that he must be looked upon as a very unskilful adventurer.

It was in 1859 that Augustus Meves, of 35 University Street, St. Pancras, a gentleman

of musical tastes in business on the London Stock Exchange, died suddenly in a cab. In the following year appeared a book by his son in which it was announced that M. Meves had really been Louis XVII. During the next sixteen years four other similar books were issued, the most interesting of which was called "Louis XVII. *versus* the London Times," by Augustus de Bourbon—the younger Meves had by this time dropped his unaristocratic name for one more consistent with his pretensions—in which the author chided the newspaper bitterly for a scornful review it had printed of one of the earlier books on the Meves question.

As far as the Meves question itself was concerned, there appears to have been little in it to justify the elder Meves and the young de Bourbon in their lofty ideas. Meves possessed, without any doubt, a wonderful resemblance to the Bourbons. His photograph might be mistaken easily for a portrait of Charles X., and an incident is recounted of how, dining one day in a restaurant in the Strand, a stranger flung down on the table a French coin, exclaiming, "How like this gentleman is to Louis XVI.!" He had, moreover, scars in the same places that Louis XVII. would have had scars. Beyond that he had nothing to go on. She whom he had regarded as his mother—so he said—had

confessed to him at the time of her husband's death, when Augustus Meves was a young man, that he was really the Dauphin, and had pledged him to secrecy so long as she lived. Meves believed that this reputed mother of his had been a lady-in-waiting on Marie-Antoinette at Versailles, and that in some way she assisted at the Dauphin's escape. Meves professed also to have vague recollections of a strange childhood, a remembrance of having sat "on the knee of some great lady," and when in manhood he visited the Palace of Versailles, the great staircase seemed familiar to him.

All this is very weak, so weak indeed that it almost convinces us that Meves was sincere. Surely an impostor would have contrived a more detailed and intelligent story than this. Whether Meves was mentally unhinged and evolved the whole story out of his brain, or whether old Mrs. Meves really told him the story, either with intent to deceive or because she herself was irresponsible, it is impossible to decide, but it certainly seems likely that, however the story originated, Meves believed it quite sincerely.

In 1830 he wrote to the lady who in his eyes was his sister, and told her about his scars, and the marks on his person, and of his supposed mother's confession. The year following

he wrote again, but the Duchesse d'Angoulême paid no attention. All in all the Meves episode is rather a curious bit of psychology than a matter of importance in the history of the Dauphin pretenders.

The post-mortem history of Louis XVII. is full of these human curiosities. Some of them were mad, like Persat, who, unhinged by a wound he had received in his head, suddenly imagined himself to be the King, took to issuing proclamations and writing memoirs. In the lurid story of his escape he recounted how he had been carried away from the Temple by an organ-grinder, who had concealed him inside the instrument. Afterwards he had been drugged in such a way as to be turned deaf and dumb for ten years. Meanwhile he made the visit to America, which is the inevitable *pièce de résistance* in the stories of all the pretenders. This unfortunate creature was finally shut up in the insane asylum at Bicêtre.

Others were made Dauphins despite themselves by their mystery-loving acquaintance. Of this number was Père Fulgence, a Trappist of Bellefontaine, who, for certain strange matters in his behaviour, was pronounced to be the long-lost King, while he himself—truly a comic situation!—supported energetically the claims of another pretender, Richemont.

Perhaps the most extraordinary of all this fantastic brotherhood, however, was a personage known as Mademoiselle Savalette de Lange, who, when she died at Versailles in 1858, was discovered to be, despite her petticoats, a man. She had played the woman unsuspected for more than fifty years, and when the masquerade was discovered, people naturally enough wondered why it had been carried on. Since they could think of no more likely explanation, they pronounced Mademoiselle Savalette de Lange to have been the Dauphin. Nothing supports this wild hypothesis, but it is interesting in that it shows, by its very absurdity, how unconvinced the French public has always been in the story of the death in the Temple, since they were so ready to recognise in any man in petticoats or priest of mysterious conduct the surviving King of France.

Of the forty Dauphins there remain now to be considered three, those only whose claims are at the present day recognised as having any importance amongst a mass of obvious impostors and lunatics. These three are Eleazar Williams—who was known as Onwarenhiiaki, the Iroquois chief—the ex-Baron de Richemont, and Naundorff, whose grandson calls himself to-day by the title of Jean III., and numbers his followers by the hundred.

The scene of Williams's exploits was America, and like Augustus Meves he seems almost too incompetent a person to have concocted and carried through the elaborate imposture which occupied for several years the attention of the American press, and which has been from his own day until now the subject of frequent books.

Eleazar Williams's story is as follows:—"You must imagine," said he, "a child who, as far as he knows anything, was an idiot. His mind is a blank until thirteen or fourteen years of age. He was destitute even of consciousness that can be remembered until that period. He was bathing in Lake George among a group of Indian boys. He clambered with the fearlessness of idiocy to the top of a high rock. He plunged head-foremost into the water. He was taken up insensible and laid in an Indian hut. He was brought to life. There was the blue sky, there were the mountains, there were the waters. That was the first I knew of life."

This boy, suddenly endowed with brain and consciousness, found himself living in an Indian family in the State of New York, passing as their son, Eleazar Williams. He grew up so, went to school, studied for the ministry, and became a missionary to the Indians. In 1812 he was made a chief by the Iroquois tribe, and received the name of Onwarenhiiaki. The

Indians liked him; he appears to have been a simple, kindly soul of very inferior intelligence. He never entirely recovered from the imbecility of his childhood, and was incapable of any but mediocre mental efforts. He was happy, though, and respected, was married and a father.

Suddenly—if we are to believe his story, and it is preposterous to suppose a man of his calibre capable of so complicated a falsehood—a bomb-shell was dropped at his feet by the Prince de Joinville, son of Louis-Philippe, then King of France.

It was in October—so runs Williams's tale—that he and the Prince de Joinville, then visiting America, found themselves together on a boat going from Buffalo to Green Bay. *En route*, the captain came to Williams and said, "The Prince, Mr. Williams, requests me to say that he desires to have an interview with you, and will be happy either to have you come to him or to allow me to introduce him to you."

Williams sent back a message presenting his compliments to the Prince and acceding to his request. A little later, the Prince joined the missionary on the deck of the ship. "I was sitting at the time on a barrel," remarks Williams, with a *naïveté* which is alone sufficient to stamp his whole story as genuine.

De Joinville—the story runs—shook Eleazar





ELEAZAR WILLIAMS, THE IROQUOIS CHIEF AND SELF-STYLED DAUPHIN

*From a contemporary engraving.*



“earnestly and respectfully” by the hand, and treated him during the short voyage with a deference which astonished the other passengers and the Prince’s retinue. Arrived at their destination, he asked Williams to stay at his hotel, and that night, under a pledge of secrecy, to which Williams agreed only conditionally, he made certain revelations to the missionary, and then laid before him a parchment which he asked him to read.

Williams spent four or five hours perusing it, and read it over and over many times. In substance it was, “A solemn abdication of the crown of France in favour of Louis-Philippe by Charles-Louis, the son of Louis XVI.” Eleazar, to his amazement, understood that there was designated by this latter title himself, the Indian missionary. In exchange for the abdication he would receive a princely establishment either in America or France, and the restoration of all the private property of the royal family rightfully belonging to him as the heir of Louis XVI. After long consideration, Williams declined to sign. He could not, said he, be the instrument of bartering away with his own hand the rights pertaining to him by birth. The Prince showed annoyance, but Williams, having acquired through the disclosure a position of superiority over the young man, rebuked him.

“When I spoke of superiority,” says Williams, “the Prince immediately assumed a respectful attitude.” Soon after, they parted.

Poor Eleazar’s head was swimming with amazement. He the rightful King of France!—it was staggering. He went to the Indian woman whom till then he had called his mother, and sought some confirmation of the story, but she would not speak. He explained this by the theory that “the Romish priests” (Williams was a Protestant) had been tampering with her, had told her that if this Protestant should come to the throne of France many souls would be lost and incalculable harm done, so she must give no help in bringing about an event so dangerous. His “reputed Indian mother”—for it was thus that Williams now spoke of her—kept, therefore, her mouth tight sealed, and gave no evidence either to confirm or to deny the Prince’s story.

Williams, however, discovered that he, like Meves, had scars in places where the Dauphin would have had scars. One day a Frenchman read the Indian an account of Louis XVII.’s imprisonment, and of how Simon had hit him with a towel, inflicting wounds, one over the left eye, the other to the right of the nose. “And now,” said he, “let me look at your face.” In the places indicated were scars.

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried the Frenchman. "What proof do I need more?"—*What indeed?*

Onwarenhiiaki, the Iroquois chief, was certainly very unlike a man of Indian parentage. His hair was brown and soft, his eyes hazel, his cheekbones not high, as is invariably the case with Indians. In short, he was, beyond any possibility of doubt, a white man.

But the fact that Eleazar was not an Indian is very inadequate proof that he was a Dauphin. Williams, none the less, was fully convinced of his royal identity. In 1848 he announced himself to be the Dauphin. The news spread and aroused great interest; in America, France, and England, the newspapers spoke of it.

Presently, as was the case with most of the pretenders, he gained an ardent prophet. It was the Rev. John Hanson, who published a long article in *Putnam's Magazine*, in which were recounted the story of Eleazar's mysterious childhood and of the Prince de Joinville's revelations. This article, copied in an English periodical, fell under the eyes of the Prince, who sent through his secretary a long letter to the publishers, stating that, though he had had considerable intercourse with Williams in 1841 in the circumstances described by the missionary, and had learned from his lips much information of great interest about the early history of the

French in America, the really important part of the alleged conversation—the matter of Williams's identity with Louis XVII.—was never mentioned between them. That part of the missionary's story was, according to the Prince de Joinville, "a work of imagination."

Now a work of imagination is the last thing of which Williams's simple, God-fearing mind would have been capable. If there is any one thing that is sure in the morass of uncertainty which is called "The Louis XVII. Question," it is that Williams never concocted the story of his pretended royal origin. He may have been trusting enough to believe the story on absurdly inadequate grounds, but never in the world could he have invented it.

If, on the other hand, the Prince did really come to America on behalf of Louis-Philippe armed with "the solemn abdication," how are we to explain the French king's insane indiscretion in telling this harmlessly ignorant man matters which might turn him into a dangerous rival? No course could have been, in the circumstances, more ridiculous. There remains, therefore, only one likely explanation of the crotchet that poor Onwarenhiiaki carried about in his head for so many years. Is it not very possible that the Prince de Joinville, a youth of twenty-three, may have permitted himself to play a little practical

joke on the old Indian clergyman whom he met on his travels, may have worked on the missionary's simplicity and gullibility, never fancying Eleazar would take the matter so seriously, and may have, in after years, found it more advisable to deny the whole transaction than to acknowledge the undignified part he had played in the cruel farce? The document—the poor old countryman hanging over it bewildered in a backwoods inn—the young Prince chuckling behind his hand: one can picture it all and believe readily that it was by the practical joke of this boy that a continent was agitated.

Williams, it is said, never sought to make gain from his pretensions, and this appears to be true. The same, indeed, is the fact with several of the pretenders who were admittedly fraudulent; and it is a curious problem for the psychologist that men should have taken on their souls the burden of so great a lie with no compensating hope of thereby enriching their pocket-books. Little more is known of Williams's career. His prophet, Hanson, died, and after two pretended attempts at assassination, Williams himself died in 1858.

That his claims, however, still attract notice and sympathy is shown by the publication, as lately as 1905, of a book in which Mr. Publius V. Lawson makes Williams his hero, and shows a photograph of an amiable-looking, bald-headed

gentleman, with a conspicuously patterned necktie, in which is thrust a fleur-de-lis pin. Under this portrait appears the legend, "Mr. George Williams—1904. The last of the Bourbons and only rightful claimant to the French throne—grandson of Eleazar Williams." In the text of Mr. Lawson's book we read that "the last of the Bourbons" now lives in St. Louis, and, having no children, is indeed the last of his race.

We may explain Eleazar Williams as the victim of a joking Prince, but Richemont, the next of the trio of important pretenders, we cannot explain at all. An impostor he was, without doubt, but what was his real origin, or what the name he ought to have borne, no one can tell. Of all the forty Dauphins he was the most mysterious. During his career he used eleven different *aliases*. When he exclaimed at his trial, "Gentlemen, if I am not the Duc de Normandie, who am I?" none could answer him. The question is still unanswered. For all history can prove to the contrary, Richemont may have dropped from the sky one fine day in the early part of the nineteenth century.

Richemont said that he had escaped from the Temple through the help of the Simons, and had been taken immediately to a house in Paris where he met Josephine de Beauharnais. After remaining there a few hours only, he was taken to La Vendée to the royalist army, where he went



about disguised as a girl. Presently, the Prince de Condé placed him in the ranks of the French army. As a young man he visited la Simon in the hospital, and was recognised by her as the boy she had helped to save. Then he went off to America, where he remained for more than ten years, returning in 1815.

It was now that he commenced his operations. He had no wish to claim the throne, but asked only to be recognised for what he was, and to be allowed to live in France. Louis XVIII., however, placed little belief in such abnegation, and gave his self-styled nephew no encouragement. It was then arranged that Richemont should see the Duchesse d'Angoulême. His friends had arranged that he should meet her all unprepared for the encounter in the park at Versailles. The meeting took place in the presence of the Duc de Berri, the Prince de Condé, and others. The Duchesse looked at him with astonishment and emotion. Richemont and his friends asserted that she recognised him for her long-lost brother.

At last she exclaimed, "Go! go! You have been the cause of much unhappiness, and my arms shall never open to receive the enemy of my family." Richemont professed to find in these words a reference to the terrible accusations which the Dauphin had brought against his mother and aunt, and set down her refusal to accept him for what he pretended to be to political reasons.

Nothing discouraged at this rebuff, Richemont issued to all the Powers of Europe a formal protest against Louis XVIII.'s having stolen his throne. Louis XVIII. retaliated by bringing about Richemont's imprisonment at Milan for seven and a half years. Finally Richemont, free again, returned to Paris, protested again, this time against the election of Louis-Philippe, and attracted many sympathisers. He was handsome and attractive, a man of medium height, blonde, well-built, bright-eyed and animated, graceful in his movements, and sweet-voiced. It is no wonder he gained sympathy. In 1833 he was arrested again, kept in prison for fourteen months and then tried, though no one would consent to plead for him.

His trial was a very exciting affair. The most curious incident occurred when, in the midst of proceedings, there appeared a personage dressed all in black, with white hair and bearing an enormous document sealed with the arms of France. This man had come to protest in the name of the other Dauphin (Naundorff) against the pretensions of this Dauphin (Richemont). It was almost farcical.

On the charge of having plotted against the government, Richemont was convicted, and condemned to twelve years' imprisonment in a fortress. Meantime, it was suggested to him—as he declared—that if he would give up his pre-



NAUNDORFF (SOI-DISANT LOUIS XVII)

*After an unpublished portrait by Clayton in the possession of Mr. J. H. P. Morgan*

*(continued)*

1. The first group of people who are interested in the study of the history of the United States are the people who are interested in the history of the United States.

tensions to the throne, the Princesse Clémentine, daughter of Louis-Philippe, would be given to him as wife and his parentage would be acknowledged. This offer he declined loftily. Within a few months he escaped from prison and went abroad, returning to France in the amnesty of 1840 and continuing his claims.

He and Naundorff were deadly rivals, which is only natural in consideration of the fact that, of the forty would-be Louis XVII.s, they alone present claims that are worthy of really serious consideration. The two men insulted one another and cast reflections on one another in a series of pamphlets and through the voices of their respective followers.

Richemont had the better of the struggle in one way, since he survived his rival by eight years, but his success was never so great as Naundorff's, and nowadays, though he has a certain number of followers, comparatively little interest is taken in him, while the claims of Naundorff are still a live question in France. This is for one reason due to the fact that Richemont left no heirs, while Naundorff's descendants have been many and energetic. It is a curious coincidence that both men died on the 10th August, that date which years before had been so fatally important in the life of the child whose identity they claimed.

It was in the château of the Comtesse d'Apchier, whose husband had been a page to Louis XVI., and who herself believed entirely in his claims, that Richemont died in 1853. In his death certificate he was called "Monsieur Louis-Charles de France," and over his grave a monument was erected, bearing this inscription :—

CI-GIT

LOUIS-CHARLES DE FRANCE

FILS DE LOUIS XVI. ET DE MARIE-ANTOINETTE

NÉ À VERSAILLES LE 27 MARS, 1785,

MORT À GLEIZE LE 10 AOÛT, 1853.

Five years passed, and then the Minister of the Interior gave orders that this legend should be removed. In its place were put some words Richemont himself had pronounced to the Comtesse, in a fit of melancholy, a few days before his death :—

1785.

NUL NE DIRA SUR SA TOMBE,

PAUVRE LOUIS,

QUE TU FUS À PLAINDRE !

PRIE DIEU POUR LUI.

Both inscriptions still exist; for instead of scraping the stone away when the change was made, the stone was simply turned around, the offending side placed against the chapel wall, and the new inscription, which alone by the date, 1785, preserves Richemont's pretensions, put toward the world. Thus the man who came, none knows whence, to play his romantic rôle of lost Prince, sleeps under a tomb of very fitting ambiguity.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE FORTY DAUPHINS (*continued*)

NAUNDORFF now alone remains to be considered of the trio of foremost pretenders, of whom he was indubitably the most important. His cause is still a burning question in France, and has been the subject of scores upon scores of books, and the *raison d'être* of at least five regular magazines, of which two still survive and flourish, *La Légitimité*, founded twenty-five years ago by "Osmond," a well-known Naundorffiste writer, and *La Revue Historique de la Question Louis XVII.*, a paper of more recent growth. To the most sceptical there is something in Naundorff's career which cannot altogether be scoffed at. He cannot be thrust offhand into the little band of the forty adventurers. Even though one refuses to take him at his own valuation, one must at least treat Naundorff with respect.

On the 26th May 1833 a mysterious person, handsome, noble-looking, and of distinguished manners, arrived in Paris. He was no other



than Naundorff, come after many struggles to seek the rights which he protested were his. At first he met with discouragement, but presently his army began to gather together. Madame de Rambaud, who had been nurse to the Dauphin from birth, was certain she recognised in this man of fifty the child she had held on her knees; other persons from the old court were equally positive of his identity. His success was prodigious, and in four months it is said that no less than four millions were laid at the feet of this man.

Who was he, and what had been his antecedents? His opponents called him a Jew from Potsdam. Only a few years ago M. Otto Friedrichs, one of the most accomplished of Naundorffistes, offered to pay M. Anatole France 10,000 francs if he could substantiate this statement, and the forfeit is still unpaid. Naundorff's own story is that, after his escape from the Temple by a complicated process of substituted little boys, he went through a quantity of adventures and misfortunes, and suffered, in all, some seventeen years of more or less rigorous captivity before he was twenty-four. The most trying experience of all was a four years' imprisonment in a black dungeon, where rats "about the size of rabbits" tormented him.

Escaping from this, he established himself in

Berlin as a watchmaker, but presently, pursued as ever by his enemies, he was forced to leave the city and go to Spandau, where on the advice of a friend he definitely assumed the name of Charles William Naundorff. He now sent a friend to the Duchesse d'Angoulême, who must, poor lady, have found herself greatly confused amongst all this crowd of men pretending to be her brother. To this friend, M. Marsin, Naundorff furnished proofs of his identity with Louis XVII. "I do not know what became of him," said Naundorff in his memoirs, "but I have been told that he was arrested and imprisoned at Rouen, and that an individual by the name of Mathurin Bruneau was substituted for him, while he himself was kept out of the way."—A fine muddle this last!

The Duchesse d'Angoulême ignored him; everywhere he was thwarted and discouraged, and in 1818 he took the resolution "never to appear again on the scene of the world, but to consign himself to eternal oblivion." Free, therefore, to ignore his rank, he married Mademoiselle Jeanne Einers, a fine-looking girl of simple parentage, who did not hear of her husband's secret till long after her marriage.

This alliance seemed at the time to sign his abdication from his royal claims. The fact is, however, that had it not been for the marriage

and for the energetic procedure of his wife and children after his death, Naundorff would to-day be as completely forgotten as Richemont and the Iroquois chief. Two years later, Naundorff appears to have changed his mind about "eternal oblivion," for he wrote again to the Duc de Berry, his supposed cousin, who replied encouragingly that he found he had been deceived about Naundorff. Ten days later, however, while Naundorff was waiting eagerly for the Duc de Berry to do something on his behalf, word came that the Duc had been assassinated. Naundorff drew from this the conclusion that the Duc de Berry had perished for his interference on behalf of Louis XVIII.'s enemy, himself.

Entirely giving over his dream of oblivion, Naundorff then determined to go to France and to see in person the Duchesse d'Angoulême. This decision he made in 1820. It was thirteen years before he was able to carry it out. The fates, or, as Naundorff thought, his enemies, were against him. About to go to France, he was detained by a charge of having—as he grandiloquently phrases it—"endeavoured to circulate false coin"—"the sole indication of his august origin," to quote an unsympathetic and cynical writer. To this other accusations were added. He was charged with arson, with theft, and with murder. The evidence against him

seems to have been slender and the court prejudiced. He was condemned, and remained in prison till 1828. At last, after a score of misadventures, he reached Paris in time to send his rather laughable emissary to the trial of his rival Richemont, and to be recognised by that strange mystic, Martin de Gallardon, as "the Heaven-sent King of France."

This Martin de Gallardon, the second Joan of Arc, is a strange figure in nineteenth-century history, and the seriousness with which Louis XVIII. and his government treated the visionary, prevents our setting him aside as altogether negligible.

Thomas Ignace Martin was a petty labourer in Gallardon near Chartres, a man of thirty-three, the father of four children, and a person whose conduct had never shown signs of hysteria or religious mania of any sort. On the afternoon of January 15, 1816—in the many books that have been written about him these details are most painstakingly recorded—he was in the fields, working, when suddenly there appeared before him a man an inch or two over five feet tall, of slender, pale face, dressed in a long, straight coat of light colour buttoned down to his feet, his shoes fastened on with strings, and on his head a round, tall hat. This peculiar figure spoke to Martin.

"You must go find the King and say to him that his person is in danger," said the creature.

Martin, astonished, replied, "But you could find others besides me to do such a commission."

"No," said the unknown; "'tis you who are to go."

"But," objected Martin again, "since you know so much about it, you could very well go to the King yourself and tell him the message. Why do you seek out a poor man like me, who does not know how to explain himself?"

"It is not I who am going," was the reply; "it is you. Pay attention to what I say to you, and do exactly as you are told."

And then, suddenly, the figure disappeared. The feet of it seemed to lift themselves up from the ground and the head and shoulders to sink lower, so that its body became smaller and smaller, till finally it faded away altogether in mid-air. Martin, more alarmed at this fashion of departure than at the apparition of the creature and its strange words, tried to rush away, but could not, and was held there in the field by some force until his work was finished.

Martin reported what had happened to the *curé*, who set it down to imagination on Martin's part, and was little impressed. However, three days later the creature returned, and met Martin

when he was fetching apples from his cellar. Two days after, the labourer met him again at the door of the outhouse, where he kept fodder for his horses. Martin was terrified, and fled; but as these apparitions were repeated, at church, in the road, at the threshold of his own house, he grew gradually accustomed to them, though the sudden disappearance of the creature never lost its power to bewilder and alarm him. To all but him the figure was invisible. One day, when his family was near, the unknown appeared before him, and said, "Carry out your commission; do as I have told you, for you shall not have peace till you have obeyed." The others neither saw nor heard anything.

At last, Martin having lost sleep and appetite from these visitations, the *cure* became alarmed and sent him to the bishop at Versailles, who asked him many questions and laid the matter before the police. Presently he was taken to Paris, questioned by several officials and examined by a doctor, who pronounced him to be, despite the visions, quite sane and in perfect health. It was at this time that the unknown—now Martin's constant adviser—announced to him that he was the Archangel Raphael, and told him also that France would not be at peace till 1840.

News was brought to Martin that he was about

to be summoned before the King. The unknown, appearing simultaneously with the notification, assured Martin that when he was in the royal presence, he, Raphael, would supply him with suitable matter to talk of. The labourer was then taken to an asylum to be kept under surveillance for a fortnight. The unknown continued to appear to him frequently.

"The next time he comes," said one of the asylum authorities flippantly to Martin, "ask him if he will not take me under his protection. I should be very glad to be under the protection of an angel."

There was no need for Martin to deliver the message, for when the angel appeared a short time after, he said, "There is some one here who has asked that I should protect him. You will say to him that those who profess religion and have a firm faith shall be saved."

In April Martin left the asylum, where he had behaved with a calm and good sense that seem ridiculously out of place on the part of a man who professed to be having daily chats with an archangel, and at last went to see Louis XVIII. Said Louis to him, as he entered the room in the Tuileries where the King was awaiting him, "Good day, Martin," and then bade him sit down. Martin was still in his labourer's clothes, the King dressed grandly with decorations and

orders. All friendliness, Louis asked the man what it was he had been so anxious to communicate to him.

In accordance with the promise of the vision, Martin found himself supplied with words. He told the King of matters which Louis had supposed known alone to himself and God.

Then Martin said, "I have to confide in you that the place you occupy does not belong to you."

"What!" cried Louis, and listened aghast while Martin told him that the son of Louis XVI. was not dead, and that he, Martin, had a supernatural mission to announce to Louis that he should seek out this son and give to him the throne. Louis wept, and so did the labourer; the courtiers, who, it is said, watched the interview through the keyhole, were full of amazement. At last, after being nearly an hour together, Louis dismissed the visionary, offering him a gratuity which he declined.

Immediately after this, Martin returned to Gallardon, resumed his work, and lived there in unbroken simplicity for nearly twenty years, seeing no more visions and attending to his business without affectation. Just before his death, he recognised in Naundorff the lost King of whom he had spoken to Louis XVIII. When, a few months later, he died under cir-



cumstances which suggested foul play, his widow fancied he had been murdered for his refusal to retract his acceptance of Naundorff.

Whether Martin's death was from an unnatural cause or not, the rumour that he had been murdered for his recognition of Naundorff was, of course, a fine thing for Naundorff's claims. Naundorff was now gaining a tremendous success. An attempt had been made to assassinate him by three men who set upon him in Paris one night and stabbed him several times. The insignificant wounds he received were a small price to pay for the advertisement. Finally, he announced his intention of claiming by law his right to the inheritance of what private property had been left by Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette. This was in 1836.

In the behaviour of the government in face of this audacious declaration we see what is one of the strongest points in support of Naundorff's claims. Instead of imprisoning and trying him, as had been done in the case of the other pretenders, they seemed to fear the result of a public airing of his pretensions, and in June arrested and drove him out of the country. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the government that so plainly avoided coming to an issue with this man did so from fear.

His wanderings recommencing, Naundorff sought refuge in London, and settled in Camberwell, where it is said he formed a friendship with Meves, the two of them exchanging reminiscences of their pretended experiences in the Temple. His popularity was now at its height. His followers drew obvious conclusions from the pusillanimous behaviour of the police. Moreover, another attempt was made to assassinate him, which increased popular enthusiasm.

With fatal and unnatural indiscretion, Naundorff chose this moment to launch a religious work over which he had been brooding for some time. This he called *La Doctrine Céleste*, and its character was not such as to inspire in his followers a belief in the author's common-sense. This publication greatly injured his cause, and his band commenced to dwindle sadly. Naundorff now removed to Holland, where he announced that he had invented a wonderful new projectile. In the midst of his efforts to introduce his invention, he died at Delft, on August 10, 1845. A few months before, a final attempt had been made to kill him, and his partisans did not hesitate to set down his death to poison.

His funeral resembled a true royal ceremony, addresses were delivered, and the Dutch govern-

ment permitted the inscription on his tomb in Delft of the following words :—

ICI REPOSE  
LOUIS XVII.  
CHARLES-LOUIS, DUC DE NORMANDIE,  
ROI DE FRANCE ET DE NAVARRE,  
NÉ À VERSAILLES LE 27 MARS, 1785,  
DÉCÉDÉ À DELFT LE 10 AOÛT, 1845.

In 1863 the States-General of the Netherlands authorised Naundorff's son to assume the name of de Bourbon, and the Delft tombstone has been left undisturbed, despite its arrogant claims. This nominal reparation, however, did not satisfy his descendants. Within five years of his death his widow and children appeared in the French courts to claim their privilege to enjoy the civil rights belonging to them as the representatives of Louis XVI.'s son. The distinguished Jules Favre pleaded for them—he who shared with Gruau de la Barre, a former magistrate and author of many large books about this hero, the honour of being Naundorff's chief prophets. Notwithstanding M. Favre's eloquence, the case was lost. In 1874 the

Naundorffs appealed against the judgment of the first trial, and lost again.

Undismayed by these two defeats, however, the Naundorffistes have formed for themselves a little world. On Naundorff's death they dubbed his eldest son "Charles X.," and on the death of the latter recognised as his successor a younger son, "Charles XI." The present uncrowned Naundorff is called "Jean III." The enthusiasm of the Naundorffistes is a wonderful example of devotion to an abstract idea. There is none of them who would wish to give the throne of France to Jean III., their interest is merely to right an historic wrong, to establish in the public mind a conviction that Louis XVII. escaped from the Temple and became the man afterwards known as Naundorff.

In the first of these attempts they have secured a fair amount of success. Half a century ago, the historian felt himself justified in speaking in these words of the question of the Dauphin's survival and of those who believed in it: "However great the number of knaves in the world may be, they are always sure to find an ample proportion of fools and dupes." With further research into the mystery, however, opinions have changed, and no one may call a student of the period a fool or a dupe because

he recognises the fact that the Dauphin's death is a thing very insufficiently proved. So much Naundorffistes have established, at any rate ; but in the direction of persuading the public that their hero was indeed Louis XVII. they have been less successful.

The fact is that there is something subtly unconvincing about Naundorff. In judging his claims or those of any other of the self-styled Dauphins, one must depend to a large extent on instinct, since positive documented evidence is practically non-existent, and since what evidence there is on behalf of each pretender contradicts positively the evidence of every other pretender—a fact that serves, though perhaps unfairly, to cast suspicion on the cases of the whole forty. One may not say in a case of this sort, “I believe in this pretender and disbelieve in that one, because the first offers convincing proof of his identity and the second does not,” for no one of them offers real proofs. What one may say is merely, “I believe in the identity of this pretender, not only because he is able to bring forward the best evidence in support of his claims, but also because I see that his character was one which showed truthfulness, in so far as I can detect truth or lie, and sound sense, the two qualities most necessary in a person who is to convince me, by mere force

of saying it, that he has been the victim of terrible fraud and injustice."

Now, in the first of these counts, Naundorff stands pre-eminent amongst the pretenders. The proofs of his identity, though slight, are by far better than that offered by any other of the forty Dauphins. They lie not in the evidence he was able to advance, but in the treatment he received—in the fact that he was able to convince Madame de Rambaud that he was as he pretended, to convince her not alone by resemblance—always a tricky proof of identity—but also by his knowledge of small private details in the childhood of Louis XVII.; in the fact that he was never brought to trial as the other pretenders had been, but was hustled out of the country by a government obviously nervous about what might be brought to light at his trial, if the case were allowed to come before the courts; and finally, in the peculiar and embarrassed behaviour of the Duchesse d'Angoulême in regard to him.

We have here three good reasons why Naundorff's claim cannot be treated with entire disrespect; but they are insufficient to prove his case if we cannot add to them the testimony of character, and cannot see in Naundorff a man marked by the necessary qualities of truthfulness and good sense. Truthfulness is not

always easy to recognise. To any one, however, who will read Naundorff's autobiography, "An Abridged Account of the Misfortunes of the Dauphin," it will be clear that this is not a man of absolute accuracy. He contradicts himself in details; his autobiography does not in its smaller points bear the stamp of absolute sincerity. It reads, in short, like a story. Here, then, lies doubt as to Naundorff's truthfulness.

It is equally hard to believe in his good sense. What can we make of the judgment of a man who hobnobbed with Martin de Gallardon, and who in later life set himself up as a prophet, wrote a work of so absurd a character as *La Doctrine Céleste*? Surely he is not to be depended on.

Had Naundorff shown, in addition to the evidence in his favour, that he was, in such matters as can be checked by our own knowledge, a man of absolute truthfulness and of a clear intelligence, we should have felt his case to be practically proved and his claims established. As it is, we decline to believe in them, yet acknowledge we must that there is much in Naundorff's career that is very mysterious if we do not explain it by the fact that he was, as he pretended, the son of Louis XVI.

If Naundorff was not the Dauphin, how did he know enough of the intimate details of the

Dauphin's childhood to satisfy Madame de Rambaud that he was indeed he whom she had nursed years before? How was it that he recognised the little blue coat as one he had worn at Versailles, despite the fact that the still suspicious lady, to test him, assured him he had worn it in Paris? Why was it that the government feared him, and the Duchesse d'Angoulême behaved so strangely when he was mentioned? He must evidently have known something, have possessed some secret which made him a very dangerous person to a government that wished no doubt to be cast on the death of Louis XVII., and to the sister who—if we grant that the Dauphin escaped from the Temple—had shown herself a selfish and wicked woman in permitting her brother to lose his name and his throne for the sake of herself and her husband. What this secret was, and how he came in possession of it, we cannot know. Perhaps he had been intimately connected with the real Louis XVII., that elusive boy who cannot be found amongst all the two-score who claimed his name. This seems, on the whole, the most likely supposition. Naundorff, let us say, was servant or companion to the Dauphin after his escape, saw him constantly, listened to his reminiscences, picked up his mannerisms, and then at some likely moment—



on the death of Louis XVII. perhaps—assumed his master's identity, as he may have done his old clothes, and acted so convincingly the part of Louis XVII. that, by a masterpiece of imposture, the Prince's old nurse was deceived and the government of Louis XVIII. and Louis-Philippe affrighted.

And so, many comedies have risen from this great tragedy. To the mind's eye comes a grotesque picture—a poor martyred king buried namelessly, and above his grave a strange little band of knaves and lunatics, quarrelling amongst themselves, each raising his voice to shout, "I am the Dauphin!" while underneath their bickering the Dauphin sleeps in the peace he has deserved so well.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD

IT is impossible to deny that the forty would-be Dauphins, with all their attendant intrigues and absurdities, form one of the principal jokes of history. It would be unfair, however, to dismiss with a laugh the Dauphin mystery as a whole; for despite the fact that the twoscore self-styled Louis XVII.s were in all probability every one of them impostors of varying degrees of turpitude and cleverness, the fact remains that the question of the imprisoned Prince's fate has an existence and an interest quite apart from their activities.

Had never a single man pretended to be Louis XVII., the mystery of his death would still have an importance. Indeed, it would have perhaps a greater importance than it has now, when the historic detective is forced to look upon it through a haze of, for the most part, farcical and fraudulent pretensions.

What eventually happened to Louis XVII. is a question, to my mind, entirely unanswerable.

I do not see him in any of the forty pseudo-Dauphins. On the other hand, I do not see him in the child who expired on Lasne's bosom, murmuring pathetic words about his mother's voice. I am convinced, in short, that the child escaped from the Temple, but I have no idea what happened to him afterwards.

Belief in his escape is not founded on any of the arguments of the pretenders, but rather on the actual events in the history of France during the half-century that followed June 8, 1795.

"Sometimes," says M. Lanne in his book, *Louis XVII. et le Secret de la Révolution*, "an astronomer is able, by observing certain influences brought to bear on movements of the stars, to deduce the presence of a planet still unseen, to mark its place, to determine its orbit and to judge of its weight and volume. By this same method some day a future historian, in taking account of certain apparent political inconsistencies during this period, will deduce with equal sureness the existence of some unknown factor, and will be able by force of deduction to arrive at last at an exact knowledge of what this factor was."

What are these irregularities in the historic heavens which may be interpreted to reveal an unseen planet, a king cheated of his heritage?

Of irregularities the history of France shows plenty indeed during the unhappy half-century that followed the Dauphin's birth and during which the troubled country knew half-a-dozen rulers and governments (Louis XVI., the Republic, Napoleon, Louis XVIII., Charles X., Louis-Philippe). Some of these irregularities must seem to the unprejudiced observer to have an indubitable connection with the mystery which surrounded Louis XVII.'s end—a mystery which, it may be conjectured, was not so mysterious to the various governments of the period as it has always been to the general public.

These peculiar circumstances do not commence to be seen until the restoration of the Bourbons. Napoleon was far too busy conquering Europe to trouble himself over the fate of his uncrowned predecessor, Louis XVII. In 1814 Napoleon fell, and the Bourbons, in the person of the child's uncle, Louis XVIII., were returned to power. This restoration was arranged by the allied powers of Europe. Yet the powers had certainly not accepted blindly the unconvincing death-certificate of June 1795. In most of the courts of Europe it was suspected that the Dauphin had not died in the Temple as he was represented to have done; in some of them it was very possibly known for a fact that he had escaped. Why, then, did they permit and encourage the fraud by

which his uncle was allowed to cheat the young King of his throne?

The Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia, it is said, visited the ex-Empress Josephine at the château of Malmaison while the negotiations were in progress after Napoleon's first downfall.

"Whom shall we put on the throne of France?" they asked her.

"The son of Louis XVI., to be sure," was her answer.

When the treaty was drawn up—this circumstance too is more a matter of hearsay than of conventional and authenticated history—it contained a secret article which ran as follows:—

"Although the allied powers have not the material proof of the death of Louis XVI.'s son, the situation in Europe and their own political interests demand that they should put at the head of affairs in France Louis-Xavier, Comte de Provence, under the ostensible title of King, though he will be considered in their secret transactions as merely regent of the kingdom for the next two years, the powers reserving to themselves meantime the right to seek determining evidence on the point which will eventually determine to whom belongs the reigning sovereignty of France."

At any rate, whether their feeling was thus

formally expressed in the treaty or no, there is much evidence to prove that all over Europe the belief was common that Louis XVIII. was a usurper, and that the French crown really belonged to his long-lost nephew. Even Simien-Despréaux, the sentimental historian who was amongst the first to recount the supposed Dauphin's dying words, was forced to acknowledge the prevalence of this belief. In 1814, when Louis XVIII. had just been called to the throne, the rumour spread about Paris, said Despréaux, that Louis XVII., "like another Ninias," was living, and that among the signers of the treaty of the 23rd April there were those who had in their hands proofs of his existence.

If contemporary gossip is right and the treaty did indeed contain a clause by which Louis XVIII.'s reign was limited in this way, it was certainly a trying situation for the new King. The Comte de Provence had waited and longed all his life for the crown, and now, at sixty, the reward of his passionate ambition was merely to be ostensible king, and that only on sufferance.

Still, he was on the throne, and despite the Damocles' sword that hung over his head, he was not, after all, in such a bad position. The powers had stipulated for two years' time in which to seek out positive evidence about Louis XVII.'s fate; but how, to be sure, were they to seek

successfully when this ambitious and unscrupulous old man stood ready to baulk them at every step? His help was needed if the lost Prince was to be discovered and identified. We may be sure his help was not forthcoming. Indeed, as was very natural to a man of his character and in his position, he opposed this possible identification in every way—even, some say, by crime.

For example : when Josephine died suddenly a few weeks after Louis XVIII.'s accession, she was believed to have been poisoned, and "all Europe named the author of her premature death." The ex-Empress, it will be remembered, was supposed to have assisted in the Dauphin's escape from the Temple. As lately as 1870, indeed, the Empress Eugénie stated that it had always been a tradition in the Bonaparte family that Josephine had conspired for this escape, and that her sudden death was due to her imprudence in speaking too freely of the matter in after years.

The soft-hearted and romantic Josephine had no doubt revelled in the intrigues which centred in this ill-used child, and during Napoleon's time she used often to speak of the part she had played in delivering him. Las Cases, who shared Napoleon's exile for a time at St. Helena and kept a memorial of what the deposed

Emperor said and did, states that Josephine went even further than this.

She was alarmed lest, having failed to give the great Emperor an heir, he might divorce her. "When at last she was forced to give up all hope, she often hinted to her husband at a possible political remedy for her childlessness." This remedy was the adoption by Napoleon of the lost Prince to be his heir, and thereby to consolidate the old and the new régime.

Failing in this scheme, Josephine pleaded the Dauphin's cause in 1814 before the King of Prussia and the Emperor Alexander. The King of Prussia made no promises, but Alexander undertook to consider the matter. Josephine, it may be supposed, was, or fancied herself to be, still more or less in touch with the lost Prince's movements.

A few weeks later Josephine died suddenly, and though Louis XVIII. was very possibly innocent of her death, there were many people then, as now, who did not believe him altogether guiltless.

The supporters of one of the pretenders have stated that the Comte de Provence was also a party to the intrigue which, twenty years before, saved the little King from prison and substituted another child to die in his place. Provence's motive in this was to kill his nephew's chances to the throne by accomplishing



the child's death civilly, while really leaving him still alive. It may be possible that this is true, but it would seem more likely that the Comte de Provence, hearing the imprisoned Dauphin was moribund, would have left well enough alone, and would have relied upon securing the succession he so greatly coveted by means of the child's death rather than by complicated and dangerous intrigue.

However this may be, there is no doubt that the Comte de Provence must have been informed of Louis XVII.'s escape as soon as it was accomplished, and that, hearing this news, he must have found himself in a difficult quandary. How was he to arrange matters so that his nephew might never be able to deprive him of the crown he so highly valued, even in those republican days of 1795, when it must have seemed a very shadowy bauble?

There was a way to manage this. It was not a very lofty way, but then the Comte de Provence had never been an over-scrupulous man, nor one greatly moved by influences of family affection. This may readily be seen from a letter which he wrote to the Comte d'Artois, his younger brother, a week after Louis XVI.'s death.

"It is all over, my brother, the deed is done," he writes. "I hold in my hands the official

assurance of the death of the unhappy Louis XVI., and I have barely time to send on the news to you. I am also informed that his son is dying. In shedding tears for our kinsmen we must not forget how useful their deaths will be for the State. May this idea console you. Remember, also, that the Grand-Prieur, your son, is, after me, the hope and heir of the monarchy." Did ever cynicism and cold-bloodedness flaunt themselves more unashamed? A man who could write unblushingly in this tone within a few days of a terrible family tragedy could not be expected to show any scruples in his dealings with a helpless child.

Consider his shameful part in the Favras conspiracy, where heartlessly he abandoned the faithful tool who had ceased to be useful to him. Consider his behaviour at the time of the flight to Varennes, when, it has been hinted plainly enough, he betrayed his brother's plans to Lafayette and escaped himself safely to Brussels while the King was ignominiously trapped at the frontier. Once safely a refugee, the Comte de Provence did nothing to improve the position of his unhappy brother.

"His greatest grief has been all his life that he was not born the master," wrote Marie-Antoinette to the Princesse de Lamballe, in a letter which she bade her burn, but which the Princess

kept until the day of her death, when, at the first blow that fell upon her, it dropped from her head-dress stained with blood. "This passionate wish to reign has only increased in him since our misfortunes have given him a chance to interfere and to thrust himself forward."

Talleyrand once said of him, "Monsieur is wicked. He cares only for himself. He wants the crown. His brother is in his way. It is not impossible he may get rid of him." A few years later, it was the nephew who was in his way, and Provence's impulse was to get rid of him as well. It may be supposed that his first thought was to accomplish the child's assassination, and that, for some reasons failing in this, he set himself to so arrange matters that Louis XVII.'s claims to the throne could never be recognised.

Anticipating that one day the Bourbons would return to power, and that, in default of direct heir to Louis XVI., he himself would be king, anticipating also the probability that Louis XVII. would then, if not before, come forward to demand his rights, Provence conceived the fiendishly ingenious idea of muzzling that person to whom Louis XVII. would be certain to make his first appeal for recognition, and whose decision on his identity would carry the greatest weight—that was, of course, the sister of the Prince, who had shared his captivity.

“Remember,” he had written to the Comte d’Artois, “that your son is, after me, the hope and heir of the monarchy.” To no one, then, could the recognition of Louis XVII.’s identity be a more unwelcome event than to this son, the Duc d’Angoulême, since it would deprive him entirely of rights of succession. What better way could be thought of to silence Madame Royale for ever than to join the destinies of these two young cousins—one who had everything to fear from a recognition of Louis XVII. ; the other, she who of all persons stood most fitted to make this recognition?

It was a master-stroke, so simple and yet so inevitably fated to gain success for the uncle’s plans. Before Madame Royale was even freed from her imprisonment at the Temple, the Comte de Provence had set about arranging the marriage, and had commissioned Madame de Tourzel to see the captive Princess and tell her how much he desired the marriage. In 1799 the ceremony took place, and as he witnessed it, the Comte de Provence must have smiled to himself at the thought that he had for ever silenced the person whose betrayal he had most to fear.

The new Duchesse d’Angoulême held the hope of becoming eventually the Queen of France, and of bearing a son who would in his turn be king. Was it to be supposed that she would forfeit

all this for the sake of a brother whom she had not seen since he was eight, and who had, moreover, been represented to her as having been entirely brutalised and debauched by the cruelty of his treatment at the Temple? "When we have seen broils between brothers and sisters for a few paltry franc-pieces, we can only laugh at the possibility of a cold-hearted woman like the Duchesse d'Angoulême hesitating for a moment between the calls of family affection and the prospect of the finest throne in the world."<sup>1</sup>

Cold-hearted, the Duchesse d'Angoulême certainly was. Napoleon, in a well-known scornful reference to the Bourbons, dubbed her "the only man in the family." In her childhood she had been sober and unsmiling; in maturity she carried an expression in her eyes that, according to one who knew her, struck cold all who looked at her. It has been said also that there is no historic figure more enigmatic than she; but surely, when we consider the skeleton that stood in the Bourbon cupboard, no woman ever stood in a stranger and more trying position.

Conventionally a good woman and one who liked the self-flattery of an easy conscience, it must indeed have been difficult for her to shut her ears to the voice of duty, to decline to help

<sup>1</sup> Henri Provins in *Le Carnet*, November 1903.

in clearing the mystery of her brother's fate and in restoring his rights to him. Very likely she had some idea where he was, and as she stood at the right hand of her uncle's throne, the thought must often have stabbed her conscience that the man to whom this throne honestly belonged was a nameless outcast, and that it was her selfishness primarily which had cheated him.

It is no wonder that many things in her life are curious and inconsistent. In the end, if we may believe a story which has come to us rather round-aboutly, she repented, and would have wished to make up for a lifetime's deception. The incident was recounted by General La Roche Jacquelin. "Madame," said he, "called me to her death-bed and said to me in a voice that was almost inaudible, 'General, I have a fact, a very solemn fact to reveal to you. It is the testament of a dying woman. My brother is not dead; it has been the nightmare of my life. . . . Promise me to take the necessary steps to trace him. See the Pope; see Martin's children; travel the whole world over to find some old servants or their descendants, for France will not be happy nor at peace till he is on the throne of his fathers.'"

Such, then, was the position of the reigning family of France towards him who should have

been their king: the Duchesse d'Angoulême miserably silenced by self-interest, Louis XVIII. cleverly scheming, suppressing from the archives documentary evidence which bore upon the fate of his nephew, encouraging the pathetic story of the Dauphin's death in the Temple, and surreptitiously bringing forward pretended Louis XVII.s, so that, by the easy overthrowing of their claims, his police might cast discredit on the possibility of the escape and might make the whole subject ridiculous. It was a position full of embarrassment for all concerned, but Louis XVIII. probably thought the inconveniences well offset by the crown he had gained. There is a certain poetical justice in the fact that the Duchesse d'Angoulême never profited by her deceptions, and died childless in exile.

One of the greatest embarrassments with which the royal family met was in connection with the commemoration of the pretended death of Louis XVII. Naturally it was difficult to feel an impulse of enthusiasm toward the celebrating of Masses, the erecting of monuments, and the conducting of other formal commemorative rites for a person who they knew, or at any rate suspected, was not dead at all. The boy's sister, indeed, committed rather a *faux pas* in her innocence, and omitted both at the Temple

and when she first reached Vienna after her liberation to put on mourning for the brother who even then she doubtless realised was living.

Louis XVIII. himself would never have made such a mistake. It is probable that after the restoration he would even have procured a skeleton of suitable size and would have had it buried with due pomp, had it not been that he feared lest by some ill chance Louis XVII. might one day be able to prove his rights. Should such a misadventure occur, it would of course put Louis XVIII. in a very awkward position had he previously conducted the funeral of a mock Dauphin. Another reason which might explain Louis XVIII.'s action is that the Church of Rome, which it is supposed shared the general suspicion that the Dauphin still lived, required, before permitting a funeral service to be held, fuller proof of the death than Louis XVIII. could offer. It seemed, therefore, more politic to leave Louis XVII. tombless.

Again and again the public was astonished by deliberate failures to honour in some way the memory of the supposedly dead child-king. Plans were made to hold a solemn service in the basilica of Saint-Denis in Louis XVII.'s memory, but the plans were not carried out.

In January 1816 the House of Peers and the House of Deputies voted unanimously in



favour of erecting, in the name and at the expense of the nation, a monument in expiation of the crime of January 21, 1793 (Louis XVI.'s execution), and a monument to the memory of Louis XVII., of Queen Marie-Antoinette, and of Madame Elisabeth. It was decided to place these monuments in the Church of the Madeleine. Everything appeared to be arranged satisfactorily; M. Lemot, a distinguished sculptor, was charged with the execution of a mausoleum to Louis XVII., and M. Belloc composed an inscription for it:—

## TO THE MEMORY

OF

## LOUIS XVII.

WHO,

AFTER HAVING SEEN HIS ILLUSTRIOUS PARENTS

REMOVED BY A DEATH

WHICH SORROW SHRINKS FROM RECALLING,

AND HAVING DRAINED TO THE DREGS

THE CUP OF SUFFERING,

WAS, WHILE STILL YOUNG

AND BUT ON THE THRESHOLD OF LIFE,

CUT DOWN BY DEATH.

HE DIED ON VIII. JUNE MDCCLXXXV.

AGED X YEARS II MONTHS AND XII DAYS

But again plans were changed. For no ostensible reason the monument to Louis XVII. was not erected. The commemorative honours

were restricted to the three other victims of the Revolution tragedy, and all mention whatsoever of Louis XVII. was excluded.

Even more strange was the behaviour of the royal family when M. Lemer cier, the *curé* of Sainte-Marguerite, made a formal proposal to the Duchesse d'Angoulême that the remains which he believed to be those of Louis XVII. should be exhumed and placed in a special chapel of his church.

The Duchesse cried a great deal, but declined her consent to any exhumation.

"We must be careful," said she, "not to awaken the memory of civil discords. Kings are in a terrible position, and cannot do all that they would wish." This is a creditable sentiment, but one which loses all its force when we recollect that monuments were erected to Louis XVI. and his Queen—an act which would far more readily have aroused dangerous memories than could the putting up of memorials intended merely to do honour to an innocent child.

Again in the matter of that grisly relic, the heart of the child of the Temple, the royal attitude was curiously equivocal. At the time of the autopsy in 1795 Palletan, one of the officiating doctors, conceived the ghastly idea of abstracting the heart of the child as a sort

of souvenir. Seizing advantage of a moment when his colleagues were consulting together at a distance, Palletan carried out his design.

"I wrapped the heart in a bit of linen and slipped it unnoticed into my pocket. When I got home I put the heart in a jar full of spirits of wine, and hid it behind the books on the top shelf in my library."

After the restoration, Palletan offered this relic to the Dauphin's family. At first, orders were given that it should be accepted and be preserved with honour at Saint-Denis. No doubt appeared to be felt that the heart in question was really that of the Temple child. Yet, for no explained reason, Palletan was in the end left with the relic on his hands, a snub which he deeply resented. Several years after he renewed his offer, making it this time to the Duchesse d'Angoulême, and, through the Archbishop of Paris, presenting the heart to her in a silver and crystal casket.

The Duchesse looked at it unmoved, and declined the gift.

Such behaviour seemed unnatural. Equally peculiar was her conduct to Madame de Rambaud, who, it will be remembered, had been nurse to the Dauphin in his infancy, and who had in her old age fancied she had recognised him in the person of Naundorff. Madame de

Rambaud, for the sake of championing his cause, attempted to approach the Duchesse when she was at Prague. The latter replied through a third person that "she knows Madame de Rambaud, who was, more than forty years ago, the attendant of the Dauphin, and that, not thinking it possible that a person of her age could have undertaken so fatiguing a journey, she has no reason for seeing the person of that name whom you have brought hither."

The Duchesse d'Angoulême's conduct was pronounced by Naundorff's friends to be disingenuous, and their pronouncement seems just. The Duchesse's pretence that it was not the true Madame de Rambaud who had come to Prague is unconvincing. Moreover, had she really doubted that this was indeed Madame de Rambaud, what easier method could have been found of discovering the truth than to see the lady and ask her a question or two about the old life at Versailles? By seeing her the Duchesse, had she been certain of the Dauphin's death, would have risked nothing. By declining to see her, she risked the suspicion that she was afraid of hearing something which Madame de Rambaud might reveal.

Persons with special information as to the Dauphin's fate were not popular at Louis XVIII.'s

court. We have seen that contemporary rumour set down the ex-Empress Josephine's premature death to the fact that she knew too much about this dangerous subject. Caron is another supposed victim to his own too great knowledge.

He had, years before, been connected with the household of Louis XVI., and when the royal family moved to the Temple he had accompanied them as a servant. During his service there he had seen the Dauphin often, and had helped to soften the unhappy little prisoner's fate. It was thus that he chanced to gain much information about the mystery of the Temple. After the restoration the Duchesse d'Angoulême, who had not forgotten his faithfulness, gave Caron a pension.

A little time after this, Louis XVIII. summoned Caron to him and questioned him. Caron, with a pitiful simplicity, supposed that the King would be pleased to hear of his nephew's escape, and so told him frankly all that he knew. Presently, on the 4th March 1820, Caron left his home at one in the afternoon to go to call on his daughter, and said he would come back at once. He never returned.

His family sought him everywhere, and made wide investigations to no purpose. One day his son was warned by a stranger in a *café* that it would be best for him to cease investigating

the matter. Nothing more was ever heard of Caron *père*.

Of all the royal family the Duc de Berry, younger brother of the Duc d'Angoulême, was the only person who appears to have felt any serious qualms because of the dishonourable fashion in which Louis XVII. was being cheated of his birthright. This was perhaps natural, for the Duc de Berry was, according to the Comtesse de Boigne, the only person of his family who felt any real patriotism, the rest being unmitigatedly selfish.

In 1820 this Prince became so much interested in the fate of Louis XVII. that he approached his uncle on the subject. From several sources, such as the testimony of a gentleman usher who overheard it, come accounts of their stormy interview.

The Duc de Berry commenced by saying that Louis XVII. was not dead.

This Louis XVIII. denied, but the Duc de Berry stood firm in his declaration.

Then Louis XVIII. shifted about and reminded his nephew of the very practical consideration that it was to his own advantage to keep Louis XVII. unrecognised, since he, Berry, would in this case one day inherit the throne.

"My uncle, let us be honest before everything!" cried the Duc de Berry.

And Louis XVIII. exclaimed angrily, "Sir, leave the room!"

This took place only a few days before the Duc de Berry's assassination. This crime, following so closely on the interview in question, has sometimes been attributed—though of the truth of the supposition there is in this case the scantiest proof—like the death of Josephine and the disappearance of Caron, to the fact of the victim's dangerous knowledge about the fate of Louis XVII.

However, these assassinations and disappearances are uncertain ground on which to build up theories. Far more seriously important is the peculiar fact that Louis XVII. was left so pointedly without tomb and commemoration, and that while some forty men were attempting to prove that the little King had survived, no formal seal was ever set by tomb and epitaph on the official statement that he was dead. Surely, had every other circumstance in connection with his supposed death been perfectly regular, this strange omission would by itself have been enough to arouse suspicion and to suggest the possibility that the whole of Louis XVII.'s story was not told when the signatures were set to the death-certificate of June 1795.

But if the real Louis XVII. was not the hero of the Temple tragedy, nor yet of one of the

forty farces of the pretenders, where are we to look for him during all this time? While his sister and uncle were weeping crocodile tears for him, and a crowd of youths were laying claim to his identity, where was the true Louis-Charles?

It is an unanswerable question. Two suppositions—they can be no more than that—are tenable: one that the boy died soon after his escape and when still a child; the other that he survived for a life of obscurity, too broken in body and mind to attempt to reclaim his rights. Nearer than this we cannot come to the real truth. His life, one of the saddest and strangest that ever we have known of, must remain, as far as history is concerned, a story without an end. Some day papers may come to light in the archives of some European royal house that will write the last chapter of his mystery and set a “Finis” beneath this strangely inconclusive story. Till then we may only wonder and guess.

As Duc de Normandie we have seen him at Versailles, cradled in the arms of the most fascinating woman of her time. As Dauphin of France we have seen him reviewing his child regiment in Paris. As Louis XVII., the seven-year-old king, in the Temple, we have seen him inherit the crown of the Bourbons and all their misfortunes. But how and where



and under what name he ended we can never tell.

Poor Louis-Charles! He was born in magnificence; he was brought up in the midst of a great tragedy; and he died—none knows where nor how.



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